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CHRIST OUR LIFE

“When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested,
then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory.”
—COL. iii. 4.

CHRIST OUR LIFE

SERMONS

CHIEFLY PREACHED IN OXFORD

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PREFACE

THE Sermons of which this volume consists have all been written and preached within the last ten years. That which stands first among them was preached in Hursley Church, in October 1898, in connection with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of the Church. That which stands last was preached at the Cuddesdon Festival in 1901, during the vacancy of the See of Oxford. With a few, rather important, exceptions, the others were mostly preached at Christ Church, in the Cathedral. But it is to be remembered that the Cathedral at Christ Church is apt to mean largely different congregations in term-time and in vacation. There is, therefore, a good deal of variety in the detail of the conditions of the Sermons, as well as in their dates and in their topics. But I have none the less ventured to think that they are substantially held together by the main doctrinal conviction which underlies them all. And I hope that it will not seem to be presumptuous to have tried to represent the doctrinal conviction which under-

lies them all by the use of a title, to which of course they can do no sort of justice, but which, in their different parts and manners, they may all, it is hoped, do something to illustrate.

I am the more moved to offer them to the public, and to offer them under such a title as this, because I have recently published a volume upon an important subject of dogmatic theology; and I cannot but hope that the more incidental, more varied, and more homiletic treatment in these sermons of what is largely the same line of thought, may serve in some slight ways to interpret, or even to supplement or to correct, the impression of what was there written. In connection with the word "interpret," my own mind goes chiefly to the sermons on Passiontide and Easter. In connection with the word "supplement," to those chiefly on prayer, and the explicit recognition of the power of evil, which is combated by prayer. But in such matters there may be, and I hope there will be, small touches, even in the less obvious contexts, which may subserve the general doctrinal purpose.

In connection with all this reference to dogmatic theology, there is a further thought which is explicitly present to my mind. It is part of my duty to deliver, from time to time, lectures to others upon the subject of preaching; and I have

often endeavoured, in such lectures, to point out the true relation (as I conceived it) between preaching and doctrine. The word dogmatic, as applied to preaching, is popularly supposed to carry some reproach. No doubt, if a dogmatic preacher means one who is positive in things which do not admit of positiveness; or insensible of the fineness of gradations of truth, and the inherent limits of all statements of truth in words,—by reason of the supra-logical and supra-verbal largeness and manifoldness of spiritual realities; or who is guilty of any other kind of intellectual narrowness, or censoriousness of temper; it is true that dogmatism is an unlovely quality, and antagonistic to truth. But we ought, I think, to protest against, not to acquiesce in, such a conception of the meaning of the word. And in its truer sense, I think the opportunity may be rightly welcomed of saying that all Christian sermons, as such, ought to live by the depth and reality of their dogmatic truth. People sometimes make an antithesis between what is dogmatic and what is practical, between dogmatic truth and experience, or character, or life. To a S. Paul or S. John such an antithesis would have seemed to imply a strange confusion as to the very nature of Christianity. For to them Christian character or life were not separable from, still less an advance upon,—but they *were*—the

realization in personal experience of dogmatic truth: that is, of the great world-facts, which are always more, indeed, than their own formal expression, but which must be formally expressed, and the formal expression of which constitutes theological creed. Christian sermons, as such, are not meant to be, and are not, such moral reflections, or ideal aspirations, or inculcations of practical duty, as might be wise and true apart from the world-transforming reality of Divine Incarnation, and the meaning of Atonement, and the experience, in the Church and in the individual, of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. It is these facts, the experience of which constitutes Christian character and conduct: but it is not conduct or character otherwise than as made Christianly possible by these facts,—nay, as the direct realization and conscious expression of them: which are the proper subject-matter of Christian preaching. There is a sense, then, and a very important sense, in which it is not only not untrue, but a primary principle of truth, to maintain that preaching, which is distinctively Christian, is dogmatic or it is nothing.

There is one thing more which I am disposed to add. The phrase “Jesus only” used to be held as a symbol to represent a certain kind of preaching and of doctrine. I trust that these sermons

may show with what hearty thoroughness I could identify myself with the use of such a phrase, not only as true, but as an inclusive summary of truth. I should, indeed, very earnestly protest against the attempt which used sometimes to be made—which perhaps is sometimes made still—to encourage the acceptance of such a formula by minds which could not really receive or digest it. There is no such short or inclusive summary of truth which has not to be led up to by gradual process. To those who have reached the truth first by the steps of progressive experience, such brief words rightly summarize the truth they have reached. But they represent nothing at all, or less than nothing, to those who have not yet begun. In themselves they include, if any one likes to put it so, the whole truth, and even (as viewed retrospectively) the very basis and beginning of all experience, or possibility, of truth. But historically they are not the beginning, they are rather the climax and the goal, of religious experience. To fling a phrase (however true) as it were at the heads of those whose experience does not enable them to give any adequate content of meaning to it, is only to discredit all religion, by making it seem a matter of verbal make-believes. This particular phrase has been, in its time, one of many instances of the crudeness and rudeness with which men, possessed of truth, have so

preached the truth they possessed as to make it not only unacceptable, but almost impossible, to the mind of others. There is at least as large a place in spiritual, as in ordinary secular, prudence, for delicacy, reverent tact, and wise reserve. Yet, after all, I have said this, in the way of protest, not because I desire to deprecate, but rather in order to make it possible to adopt and to emphasize, the phrase itself. For it is found at last so truly to summarize the dogmatic truth of Christian creed, which is also the practical truth of Christian experience and character, that I could wish for none, which when once truly grasped, in the intelligence and the life, could more fitly sum up, as in a nutshell, the beginning and the end of the whole matter.

I trust that these thoughts may not seem too seriously conceived for a preface to what is, after all, a very slight volume. Such as it is, I commit it, as all else that I have ventured to write, to the judgement and conscience of the collective Church.

CHRIST CHURCH,

November, 1901.

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CHRIST OUR LIFE

I

PEACE

“ . . . And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.”—HAGGAI ii. 9.

THESE words are part of the consecration of the House of God. They are part of the assurance of the glory that belongs to it. Whatever men may think of the look of it outwardly, be it grander or be it poorer—there is to be something in it, after all, far deeper than outward grandeur. The reality is more than silver or gold. “The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of Hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.” It is part of the *consecration* of the House of God—for it is part of the *meaning* of the presence of God amongst men. His Presence *is* the presence of the “Prince of Peace.”

Remember how this aspect of the Divine Presence is taken up in the words of our Lord

Jesus Christ—who emphatically claims it for His own. It *had* been the character of His Presence: it was to be His gift and legacy—a special legacy, not in the common sense, but in a very special sense of His own—which He should leave behind to those who lived in and by Him. “Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”¹

And so, when the Death and Resurrection, the Battle and Victory, are complete, it is with these words that the Blessing of the Risen Life is conferred. “Jesus came and stood in the midst and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. . . . Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you.”² It is the very temper and meaning and spirit of the Christian temple and of the Christian life.

But as we put text to text, and say these things—rather lightly, perhaps, and easily—to ourselves; there comes across them the echo of another word of His, a word which seems to strike quite an inconsistent note. “Think not that I came to send peace on the earth. I came not to send peace but a sword.”³ And we ask—How can these things be? What? He, the Prince of Peace: He, whose birth was an anthem of peace amongst men: He, with the Resurrection blessing upon His lips: can He *not* mean peace after all? or do the words of that sad presage of S. Matthew—that sad presage, alas! in experience (their experience and ours) too sadly

¹ John xiv. 27.

² John xx. 19, 21.

³ Matt. x. 34.

and too fully verified:—do they really contradict—do they change—the music of the message which we thought that our ears had caught?

No; the word of S. Matthew contradicts nothing, changes nothing. But at least it makes us stop and think. Perhaps, in our off-hand way, we were jumping in mind too fast. We were running away with a wrong idea as to the real method, or the real meaning, of peace? How often our thoughts are shallow, and lead us all astray; because we do not stop to examine the real meaning of perhaps our simplest words. We think we know exactly the meaning of a word—some common word like “forgiveness,” or “sacrifice,” or “peace”: but we have not cross-examined, not tested and weighed and compared: we have not really distinguished the true and the false, the seeming and the real: and so our whole train of thought is shaped amiss.

Peace; the Peace of God; “My peace—not as the world giveth”:—what is its true character and meaning?—*What is peace?*

Look for a moment at what looks like a picture of peace. There is (let us say) the setting of the October sun—red and large through the dim fair haze. Upward and upward the sky is ever (as it seems) more clear, more far away, more intensely blue. There is a fiery glow of red and of gold on the tired leaves of beeches and of oaks. On the one side the rich green of the pasture fields: the familiar pathway through the wood; the smoke

of the quiet cottage; the dull sounds of the farm-yard: on the other, beyond alike the brilliant lights and the deep shrouding shadows of the woodland, fading away into the sky, are the blue lines which suggest distant dreams of cliff and of sea. And all these things are motionless alike. The firs have ceased to sigh. The very aspens are still. Every far-away echo rings clear through the stillness of the air. The mere crunching of the leaves seems, by contrast, full of noise. All visible nature, at least, is hushed and still. And, here as always, the mood of visible nature is felt to issue out of, is felt to witness to, something transcendent, something spiritual, that is far beyond itself. *Is this peace?*

Alas! how often, over and over again, times without number, has human experience shown how naturally there may be—sitting, perhaps, under the shadow of the same porch, looking out together over the same scene of visible stillness—two men: to the one of whom every touch, every line, is part of one great symphony of most joyous restfulness; it is eloquent with the very inspiration of the peace of God: while to the other these same identical things are but as fuel to the fire of a devouring discontent; they are the very goading as of the demon of restlessness within.

And what, or why, is the difference? The difference is not in the outward setting. It is within the men themselves. There is a capacity in the one, an inward relation to the outward picture, which there is not in the other. What is it?

Let us take it first in its simplest and shallowest form. The one is honestly tired with work that has been dutifully done. That weariness, which sums up the history of past work, is his appetite, is his capacity, for understanding rest. To the other, without consciousness of past work, or of present fatigue through work, the sunset is not so much a rest as an idleness. It is in proportion to the strain and struggle that have gone before that the sunset and its silence breathe rest. *Then* the blood-red touch upon the autumn leaves is as a silent reminiscence of past pain: and the slanting ray is as the gold of the victor's crown. Why does an artist enhance and interpret a picture of outward peace by that emblem, in the corner, of something which is not peace? the distant factory chimney, or the restless windmill, or the broken gun-carriage, or the idle plough, or at least the old man or woman returning tired from work? Because it is this suggestion of past contrast, this touch of reminiscence of labour or pain, which is required to give their true meaning to things *which are not restful save to spirits capable of rest.*

The first, the most outward thing, which makes the power of apprehending rest, is fatigue of honest work.

But what is true in this sense of mere bodily work, is more true still, when to the thought of simple work we add the further thought of conflict and struggle. Life is not only work: it is also battle. There are powers to be struggled

against, spiritual powers of discontent and idleness, fierce temptations, or shallow worldliness and wasting of capacities: trials (of all sorts) and difficulties, testing courage, testing endurance, testing truth and strength of character. The sunset is after all but an emblem: the sunset day by day is but an earlier rehearsing of the sunset of life. Not work only, but principle in work: manfulness in conquering resistance within or without: the courage of a soldier in battle both against infirmities and temptations within, and against the opposition of others to truth and to right. There was a cause—the cause of God—to be maintained amongst men. The whole-hearted champions of the cause of God and of His Righteousness amongst men, do not live quiet, easy lives, but lives of anxiety and strain, of struggle and heroism. It is this anxiety and strain of heroism through a dutiful life which (like the day's work in the day's sunset) makes the capacity for peace, that is peace indeed, in the sunset of life. One aspect of the battle is battle with *temptation*. And battle with temptation that is battle indeed, and worthy of the name, means, in us who have sinned, a real consciousness of sin, deep and personal, grave and saddening: the experience oftentimes of failure and the discouragement of failure; and the renewal again which grows out of, and even (in a sense) is nourished by, failure. Temptation, and fall, and penitence; sadness in penitence, resoluteness in penitence, growth in penitence,

calmness, yes, and joy in penitence: these also are parts of the training for,—parts of the inward capacity of,—peace.

Once more let us add Sorrow. The sorrow of struggle, the sorrow of failure and penitence: and it may be much sorrow besides, woven indeed in and in with the story of struggle and penitence: sorrow that has now become part of the struggle and penitence and their inward tranquillity: but sorrow which seemed to come quite apart from these, and to make all these the more difficult by coming. There is sorrow of bodily suffering and worldly disappointment: sorrow of care, or love, which seems to have been spent in vain: sorrow of desolation and bereavement,—of the death or even of what seems worse than the death—of those who have been our care, and light, and love.

The sunset repose at the close of a day or a life is not restful only by force of its *contrast* with these things. The man to whom it is eloquent with Divine Peace does not merely love quiet the more because of the memory, and the contrast involved in the memory, of trouble! No! those troubles that have searched his very soul are not simply now as things that are dead and gone; they live still in a new, transfigured form: they have entered into the very structure and capacity of his spirit; and his spirit, through them, is other and more than it was. It is trial endured as trial, which becomes the material of victory. It is sorrow, grasped and borne as sorrow, which be-

comes the capacity of joy. These things, though transformed, yet live still in the life of the inner spirit, chastened, strengthened, capable through them : they are present still as part of its present being, and that presence of theirs is peace !

Our minds are full of the thought of the consecration of this House just fifty years ago ; and of him, of whose faithful and beautiful work as pastor here, that consecration is itself a memorial. Mr Keble was eminently a man of peace. Who would dream of denying that he was a man of peace ? Yet how little do they understand the meaning of their own words, who think therefore of his as a merely uneventful life ; —forgetting the very essential elements of which peace is woven. It was not the quietness of the country village ; not the stillness of the Park or of the woods ; not the neighbourhood of the Forest or the downs ; not even the unbroken regularity of everyday life, the absence of revolution, of war, of tragedy : not these things nor things like these, which made the peace which characterized his life. These things indeed may make moodiness, restlessness, indolence, callousness ; but things like these cannot make peace. No. But he was alert ever, and anxious : full of troubles ; full of sorrows ; full of irrepressible activity : a servant,—and ever busy ; a soldier,—and mostly in combat ; a champion, who knew what it was to spend and to suffer ; may we say

out that which touches the point more vitally than all these,—a saint, and *therefore* a penitent; a living saint, human, not etherealized; a living penitent,—one in whom to know His Master *was* to know himself; and realization of sin *was* realization of holiness. It was these things,—not the outward setting of silence,—which made possible in him that reality of peace, of which the outward setting of silence was but a parable.

And so too if we turn from the thought of him to the thought of this Church, built so largely by his love. If we speak of this House as a House of peace, we do not mean only that it is a place where the light is dim, and the feelings reverent, and the jarring sounds of conflict and effort hushed: we do not think mainly of the churchyard walk under the quiet limes, or the stillness which is more enhanced than broken by the voice of the church clock and bells: or the uninterrupted silence, to outward sense, of one who should come, in the soothing unhurried monotony of the Church's services, or when services are over, to sit or kneel among these seats before the sanctuary. Rather we think of what peace, peace of spirit, peace of God, means really to those who have found at once the *craving* and the *capacity* of peace. We think of what rest is to the very weary. We think of what, to the deeply and utterly contrite, is—beyond power of either speech or thought—in the breath of a real absolution. We think of the balm, to torn and

desolate hearts, of real pure self-transcending communion of spirit,—an entering into the very felt presence of God. It is things such as these,—things perhaps which transcend our experience, and which only experience enables imagination to grasp,—but which have been real to many generations before us; which, please God! shall be real and personal also to ourselves; and to countless souls among those who, after us, shall learn by slow degrees, what it is to tread these courts: it is things like these that we think of, that we aspire towards, that—in all diffident humility—we yet venture to believe in, and to *claim*; when, in connection with this House, we recall the words of Haggai;—words which are surely for ever an essential part of the consecration of the dwelling-place of God amongst men:—“And in this place will I give *peace*,—saith the Lord of Hosts!”

II

COMMERCE

“And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.”

—PSALM xlv. 12.

IT is no part of my purpose to say anything as to the date or circumstances of the writing of the 45th Psalm. Those to whom the history of humanity, in spite of all its ramifications, is one history: and the Bible, with all its manifoldness, is, after all, one Book: those to whom the marriage supper of the Great King,—in whatsoever parts, on whatsoever sides, reflected or illustrated,—has still one underlying, one supreme significance, do not need I think to offer any apology, if, underneath the detail of parable or type, they find themselves, in the Psalm as in the Gospel, face to face with a declaration of spiritual truth—not obscured but enshrined, in historical circumstance. For us, then, this morning, let the 45th Psalm simply be as an echo of the visions of the last two chapters of the Revelation of S. John, a song of adoring homage upon the marriage of the Spiritual Bride of the King, who is Lord and God.

And "the daughter of Tyre." We are familiar with Tyre in the Old Testament, both literally and typically, as the nation of splendidly successful traffickers, the sea-going merchants of the world, the embodiment of crowned and victorious Commerce. The typical descriptions of Tyre strike home, in almost every phrase, to our English consciousness: nor can any patriotic Englishman, as such, afford to be unfamiliar with the vivid picture of Tyrian splendour, or with the tremendous emphasis of divine warnings addressed to Tyre, in the 23rd chapter of Isaiah, or the 27th and 28th of Ezekiel.

"And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift." The line of thought which I venture to suggest in connection with these words this morning, I fearlessly offer as true: not true *because* this phrase occurs in the Psalm, but true in itself, with the phrase or without: and if true in itself, then true also as expressed in and through this phrase, for all those to whom this phrase has become, in its own way, part of the context and scenery of the great marriage feast.

It is indeed a picture widely different from the judgements of Isaiah or Ezekiel. They speak of the doom that waits for successful traffic, viewed upon its natural side, culminating in its natural spirit, as worldliness, luxury, and pride. But if commercial life is not necessarily carnal, if worldly wealth can be wielded by a spirit of unworldliness, and profit is not itself a curse or sin: it follows

that there must be the other side too,—the consecration of Commerce, the hallowing of gain. It must be true that Commerce, consecrating thus her work and gain, will through this consecrating, which converts her selfishness into offering, her splendour into gift;—will with her gift, and through the spiritual reality which its character, as gift, [represents—have her conspicuous place, at the great marriage crowning, among the holy handmaids of the Bride.

Commerce: the thought, so far, is before us in its most abstract form. What sort of thing do we mean by it? If I embark upon it, on what sort of thing do I embark? If I plunge into the midst of its problems, what sort of problems does it confront me with? I do not invite you to consider, or to formulate, the fundamental principles upon which trade rests. But at a time when the underlying assumptions have been so closely scrutinized, and that especially on their ethical side, it will be plain at least that (even if the very basis of commercial interchange be not itself, in some respects, still a moral problem) commercial practice is full from end to end of problems which belong essentially to the moral life. This we may instance at once, by the mention of two large questions, obviously ethical, which nevertheless underlie every part, and are illustrated (or the reverse) by every act, of commercial interchange. What is Truth? and what is Justice?

What is Truth? There is no social life how-

ever simple, in which the question does not, from time to time, rise to perplex us. Who has not argued before now, half in jest it may be, as to the morality of current social phrases, expressions of regret where relief at least is more obvious, of delight which is at least accompanied with dismay, and so forth. Upon such questions I would make only now two remarks;—first, that the truth even about them does not lie wholly in a nutshell. Their thorough moral unfolding really involves an inquiry into moral character, which is neither superficial nor simple. And secondly, that nevertheless things like these are among the slightest and simplest problems about truth.

Consider again, in a direction hardly less familiar, how difficult truth is. The more we ourselves are disciplined intellectually, and morally, the more I think do we begin to recognize how much intellectual and moral discipline is necessary to enable a man, who desires to be true, to describe, with approximate truth, even things which he himself has heard and seen. No sketch in words can ever wholly reproduce a complex living action. The adequacy of the effect which our words produce will depend upon our skill in selection of points really salient, upon the instinctive accuracy of our sense of proportion, upon our fineness of touch when we try to clothe thought or feeling in words, even if it be clear that we have no aim but truth. Selection, co-ordination, proportion, mastery of language; it is clear at a glance that these are

most complex requirements. The current phrase "traveller's tale" suggests not only the audacity of wilful imposture, but the difficulty, apart from arduous discipline, of distinguishing, with any accuracy, the falsehood, from the truth, of imagination. And if what we try to describe includes gestures, actions, words, whose importance consists in this, that they are the revelation of the minds and meanings of others, it is clear again how the whole moral experience of a lifetime may be involved, in our moral power to apprehend the true meaning of a look or a tone. But if our aim in recounting, without being untrue, is yet not truth simply: truth perhaps together with the half acknowledged desire to make our tale as amusing, or as wonderful, as possible; truth together with the desire, conscious or unconscious, to make, to ourselves and others, the best case we can for the part we ourselves have played; it is easy to see how far we may very soon wander from exact reality; how stringent a discipline of mind and character is necessary to enable us to attain to truth. Do we tell the truth? There are few men who would not be indignant if it were even suggested that they did, or perhaps that they even could, do otherwise. I do not make light of the indignation,—which has its own moral value. Yet I fancy that a deeper insight into truth would be shown by the few, who would rather say, in the humility of their stricter discipline and ideal, that they hoped, please God, that they were advancing

by degrees a little, and a little, towards the divine capacity of Truth.

But if truth, in common relations, being divine, is so difficult, what shall we say of the difficulty of the perfect balance of Truth in commercial practice? I am not thinking now so much of the temptation to acquiesce in a standard of business language which the conscience all the while condemns plainly as false. This is formidable enough. But I am thinking even more directly, of the perplexity in which conscience often finds itself, to draw an intelligible line between right and wrong, to distinguish what is true and what is not, in an atmosphere where gradations (it may be) seem infinite, and yet the balance of truth clearly lies between extremes. The commendation, more or less explicit, of what is not absolutely commendable; the concealment, more or less elaborate, of drawbacks or doubts; the possible *suggestio falsi*; the passive *suppressio veri*; what is the true moral standard about things like these? Perhaps there is hardly any relation of life, in which it would be consistent, either with Christian love or divine truth, to say always all that we think: in which therefore it may not be right sometimes to acquiesce in being understood to convey what is not our whole mind. But if it is not wholly easy in common relations, how much less easy is it in many situations of politics or of trade, to be quite sure to what extent, under what conditions, in what manner, it is possible to translate quite

literally into life the familiar precept, "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

And then there is too often the difficulty of avoiding even what is known to sin against Truth. It is too plain that these natural difficulties are not always, among us, at a minimum. How many a young man or woman has before now sadly realized that to refuse to conform to a prevailing standard, which is certainly not primarily and before all things truthful, is to imperil, as it seems, their whole prospect of livelihood.

Then again, glance at that other inclusive question, What is Justice? Assuming that justice is, in every commercial transaction, a duty inalienable, nay a primary object; yet remember how from every part and corner of commercial experience, the question is at this moment being re-echoed with ever fresh emphasis of insistence, what, in these circumstances, and in those, is the true justice? To give to each his rights? what are his rights? do they mean equality to all? equality of political influence? equality of social value or comfort? equality of educational opportunity? or what, in fact, would constitute, or even tend to produce, such equality? Or is the watchword not equality, but proportion? opportunities in proportion to capacity? and what is the measure to determine that standard of capacity, to which true justice is to proportion opportunities? Remember how such questions keep thronging in upon us from the ever-increasing self-consciousness of commercial

experience. Questions there are as to the mutual rights, and the limits of the rights, of rival traders. Questions again, of broad right, as between the traders, as a body, and their customers, the public:—the responsibility of suppliers in their treatment of the public; the responsibility of the public in their conduct towards suppliers. In more abundance and detail than either of these, we have heard questions as to the justice of the mutual relations, in any specific enterprise of trading, between master and workman, capital and management and labour. What are, or ought to be, the workman's rights? what the rights of capital, or initiation of enterprise? Has the phrase "a living wage" an intelligible meaning? what is the real principle of a fair wage? or, if the current wage be not unfair, are the workman's rights exhausted in all cases by the current wage? is all further surplusage of profit in all cases, unreservedly, the master's right? or with what possible limits? and on what principle? or when, or how, if ever, have others than the legal masters any right, ideally, to a voice in the general guidance, or prospect, or policy, of the business which is of vital moment to them all?

Again, what are workman's duties one towards another? their mutual rights of obligation? their corporate morality? The word "blackleg" is meant to be a word of disgrace. It is meant to express indignation at a moral obliquity. Is the thing morally oblique? if what it primarily involves is a claim to unfettered individual freedom, irre-

spective of corporate policy, that is, of the corporate judgement as to what is just, and necessary for justice;—is such an individualism always wickedness? or, to shift to the other extreme, can it never be morally wicked? Between these extreme judgements there is wide intermediate ground. Who shall step in and determine the when and the why: the principle and its necessary limitations? This last question we perhaps know more familiarly in another sphere. We can rarely touch politics, even in the form of voting for Parliament, or a County Council, or a School Board,—seeing that the issues before us are invariably complex; without being confronted with the difficult ethical problem as to the extent, or limits, of the moral obligation, in the midst of a system of party government, of submission of individual judgement to party discipline. Even in the most superficial contact with politics, the principle is often a puzzling one. I certainly venture to think that it is in no degree less puzzling, on patient consideration, in the morality of co-operative industry.

What is Justice? Justice indeed sometimes presents itself to our minds as meaning primarily the sifting and deciding of courts of law,—the settlement, that is, of formulated dispute, or the punishment of legally defined wrong. And even in this connection, no doubt, the work of legal justice may indeed be noble, and its pursuit inspiring. You will forgive my quoting a familiar

sentence in which Hooker embodies the enthusiasm of a religious mind for the divineness of the functions of legal justice. "If they," he says, "which employ their labour and travel about the public administration of justice, follow it only as a trade, with unquenchable and unconscionable thirst of gain, being not in their heart persuaded that justice is God's own work, and themselves His agents in this business; the sentence of right God's own verdict, and themselves His priests to deliver it; formalities of justice do but serve to smother right, and that, which was necessarily ordained for the common good, is through shameful abuse made the cause of common misery." The ideal is magnificent. God's priest, to do God's own work: the judge, the lawyer, is this; or his profession is degraded; it is justice no longer, but abuse.

Yet after all, the work of legal justice is largely the correction of the abnormal. When we think of the service of justice, God's justice in human life, the correction of what is abnormal is hardly the core of the matter, so much as the apprehension and realization of the normal. To punish legal wrong is incidental by comparison: to realize Divine equity in human relations is central. That is necessarily rough, imperfectly approximate, because coercive and tied to human rule. This is at least ideally capable, expressed as it is in all the freedom and fulness of living personalities, — of infinite development. Therefore, whilst fully accepting the enthusiasm for the legal profession of a former

Master of the Temple, we may perhaps feel still that the problem of Justice, and its Divine possibility, is with the great Masters and Leaders of Commercial industry, even more directly, and more fully, than with the lawyers. For these, as for those, and with an even larger and richer significance, it is possible to go through the world, as God's priests, discerning, proclaiming, illustrating, His own eternal attribute of Justice.

And may we put in, parenthetically, the reminder, that however *we* may abstract,—and mislead in abstracting;—in Him, in whom Justice is Justice, it is inseparable, indistinguishable, from Love? Our antithesis is an imaginary one. Love, in perfectness, is absolutely righteous,—so that failure in righteousness would be failure of love: as righteousness, in its perfection, is absolutely—I do not say the same *thing*, but rather the same one Personal Life, as Love.

All this, it may seem, is far afield. Yet I have longed to give, if possible, some living content to the ideas which I wished to use. We may fearlessly say, may we not? that commercial life, thus viewed, is inherently a life of noble possibilities: and that it is engaged in our day, as it never was engaged before, in problems which are amongst the highest that can be raised in respect of the moral relations of human life. If commerce, as such, has been somewhat widely disparaged, partly through the relics of wholly false assumptions of excellence, which I need not now refer to,—and partly perhaps

through the ignobleness of its own abuses, and in part simply because it has been the fashion to disparage it; yet none the less clearly, I think, the truth of these two observations stands out to-day: first, how magnificent is, ideally, morally, spiritually, the task which at this moment is open before it; and secondly, how truly it lies at the core of our national life. If we look at the outward conditions, as distinct from the moral capacities for making use of conditions, must we not say that nationally we are what we are in respect of the history of the past, that we are what we are for present and future possibility, by reason of our commercial record and capacity? We may say what we will of naval or military grandeur, but after all, there is a sense, in which all this is protective and incidental, rather than central, to the life. We may say what we will of science, or literature, or art; but these again are fruits which ripen out of the fulness of the life, rather than the substance of the life itself. More essentially constituting the very fabric of the national life, is that vast system of commerce, which at the same time also is the field of the great moral questions which are, in our generation, conspicuous. Their working out cannot be from the study mainly, but much more in the practice of life. Helped they may be by thinkers, more or less; but to the field of action,—to the active workers,—their real vital solution belongs.

This active life then, in the great world of

trade,—it is plain that it needs no less than the highest development of man's noblest capacities. It needs the perfectest discipline of the rational faculties, which (however) nowhere exist save as moral also ;—of the moral consciousness, which is never, for an instant, other than rational ;—of the spiritual character, which is the conscious fusion, and crown, and illumining, of both rational and moral.

Now we must needs, in this place, be allowed to assume that no nobler system, for the training of human capacities, is within our reach, than that which is attainable in our English universities. However self-regarding and shallow some university life, in conception or practice, may be, such failure shall not stand as witness against the true character, and offer, of university life. Rather we would say, if pressed on the side of abuse, *corruptio optimi pessima*. Nor do we stay upon criticisms or suggestions in detail. No doubt, if this or that falls short, it is for us to amend it : if there are nobler developments, it is for us to discern and to follow them. But meanwhile we cannot but assume that, with whatever inherent capacity of amendment or development, it is this after all which represents the highest educational possibility known to us.

But if these things be true, then with what fervour must we needs desire that this, which we *must* assume to be our highest disciplining of intellectual and moral faculties, may be, to the fullest extent

of its capacity, both attainable and effective in and for the practical working of the great commercial world. If there is divorce between our highest exquisiteness of moral culture, and this great heart and life of our national welfare, how direct is the reproach and detriment to us all!

It is difficult, perhaps, to deny that there has been, in part, such a divorce; at least, that the men of whom the universities are justly most proud, go into various other works of life, more naturally and more often: more rarely, more paradoxically, as many still think, into "business";—that the great men who are as kings in commercial life, splendid in intellectual and moral fibre as they constantly are, more often have not had that which we still must regard, and desire to regard, as the highest crown of educational privilege;—that, again, when they send their sons to fill our first classes, those sons too often exchange their father's ideals for ours;—instead of incorporating ours into their own,—and making, of both worlds, naturally and nationally, one.

I desire to make no comparisons. Estimate as you will the comparative dignity of professions,—the clerical or the medical; the legal or the literary; the scientific or the artistic; the military or the Commercial. Their order we may leave to take care of itself. Yet at least, upon any hypothesis of order, the aspiration still must be a moving one,—not only as abstract ideal, but for the directest importance of national life,—that

there should be no instinct whatever of divorce between the choicest ripeness of the highest academic discipline and the practical working out in life of the great economic, moral, and spiritual problems of Trade.

If men trained, according to the wisdom of the Church of Christ, not in scientific knowledge only, but in classical culture, in historical experience, in metaphysical and moral philosophy, in self-discipline, consideration, and courtesy, in well-grounded reverence for human—because intelligent faith in Divine—personality, were to devote themselves to the practical work of trade, as a high and complex Christian activity,—with all its work of adjustment of emerging difficulties, wage disputes, and the ethics of trade unions, modern co-operative aspirations, ancient trade customs, questions of conscience in manifold detail, the problems of the high life of Justice and Truth; they would have surely no inadequate field (to say the least) for the exercise of every faculty which they possess. Nor is it any disparagement of the men on whom the stress of these things falls, to say that training such as this, in so far as they, or any of them, lack it in fact, would have been, for the high and arduous work committed to them, an incalculable blessing and strength.

Here, then, at least it is plain, is a way of high aspiration, of ennobling enthusiasm. Yet, do we need to remind ourselves, that great moral triumphs are not achieved in a moment? that young

men plunging into a cause with most generous enthusiasm, do not carry all things before them; do not at once grasp the crown, simply because their enterprise is noble?

There may be much before us all before the Christian conscience, taught, illumined, enabled—not according to the average opinion of men half-christianized, but according to the very Spirit of the Christ, *can* be wholly victorious through all the hidden complexities of commercial—as of political, or of social—life. Divine work is very patient. A lifetime or two, what is it?—Only one link, one moment,—even though it may be a precious, nay, a vital, moment,—in the development of Divine results. Even a few generations, more or less, of martyrdom: look backwards, and in the retrospect they may seem merely like a small and very natural episode: a condition, as it were, inseparable from high moral victory.

On the other hand, no generous enthusiasm is ever thrown away. Though Peter knows hardly anything as yet of the perils, or cost, of faith triumphant over impossibilities of nature, yet Jesus, out on the water, answers his proffer at once with the order, “Come!” Though James and John have everything still to learn as to the true conditions of heavenly pre-eminence, yet the answer to what seems their almost criminal rashness is essentially an acceptance and a sealing from the first: “Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am bap-

tized withal shall ye be baptized.”¹ Ingredients there may be, in every enthusiasm, of the crudest exaggeration and ignorance. And yet it may be that no such ingredients will rob, of its essential character and ultimate promise, the loyal-hearted impulse of devotion to the service of holiness.

There are, then, two possible aspects or characters underlying the busy movement of the life of trade. It may be in meaning wholly carnal, the mere cunning of self-aggrandisement, the universal rivalry and warfare of man against man. In so far as it is this, and this is the adequate account of its mind and life, its doom is stamped beforehand upon its forehead. In so far as Tyre, the city of prosperous commerce, is content to be one with Babylon, the city of self-regarding worldliness,—the judgement of the 27th and 28th of Ezekiel only waits to be consummated in the vision of the 18th chapter of the Revelation. “The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! for in one hour so great riches is made desolate.” . . . “and a strong angel took up a stone, as it were a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, ‘Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all.’”

But over against this there is the other alternative,—the life of Commerce as a high Christian science, as a vehicle and means for the unselfish service of humanity, as a living embodiment of the Spirit of Truth, and Righteousness, of devotion and love,—the Spirit of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

And in so far as the exchange of Commerce breathes the Spirit of the Christ, how should it not have part also in the inherent glory of the Christ-Spirit? Remember how the vision of the 23rd of Isaiah,—simply, as it seemed, the doom of the city of Tyre,—yet found its climax and close in that striking paradox about the sanctifying of the hire of harlotry: “It shall come to pass after the end of seventy years that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall return to her hire, and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently and for durable clothing.” The very boldness of the paradox does but enhance the inner glory of the transformation.

Once more, to conclude with the echo of the words from which we began,—“And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.” It is Commerce, disciplined and sanctified, which is prominent among the Virgin Companions of that

Church, whose life is the breath of the Spirit of the Holiness of God. It is the life of the Church, breathing through her life, which transfigures earthly merchandize, and her characteristic temptation to spiritual unfaithfulness; until behold her! revealed before the Throne, and glorified with the signet-writing of the High Priestly mitre for her peculiar title,—“Holiness to the Lord.”

III

THE FLOWER

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”—S. MATTHEW vi. 28, 29.

WHO is there who has not been fairly surprised, at one time or another, at the magic of a beautiful flower in a sick-room? Never before did its lavish richness of colouring seem so lavish; its grace of form so perfect; the secret of its hidden growth and structure so wonderful. But there, as it stands on the little table by the bed of sickness, there seems, sometimes, to be an astonishing atmosphere about it—as of beauty, so of comfort, and of power.

But if the fact be familiar, what is the secret of it? Is it the sense of contrast? Well, the contrast often is great. The patient, it may be, so feeble, so disabled: his natural self-expression so hampered, confused, distressed: his relation to life and movement and beauty and strength and mastery so entangled and perverted: the bonds of time and space at their heaviest and most galling: the dominance of body over spirit well-nigh overwhelming.

And there, side by side with it all,—not only the glorious perfectness of growth and colour and form: everything that can express grace and delicacy and freedom, the most subtle, the most exquisite; but such matter-of-course simplicity about it withal. It is so freely self-expanding and self-expressing. Its development is so perfect of its kind. It is so inherently natural. There is no artificiality, no constraint, no dressing up, no hiding away of weakness or of wound. And this simple spontaneity, this claim, as of course, to beauty, and ease, and power, is something which goes beyond mere impression of contrast. It speaks to sickness in the language of prophecy. Like music, it steals down into the soul with the dew of half-unconscious consolation. To the patient too, for himself, it is a suggestion—and a parable: it is an aspiration—and a claim: it is an earnest, and a certain assurance.

Of what? of something not external only for the enjoyment of the outward senses; of something which belongs properly to himself; of something which neither pain nor sickness, however keen, or protracted, — aye, or loathsome, — does, or can, either contradict or impair.

Yes; we are wrong after all, if we come to think of it, even in our most familiar, and indeed most inevitable, modes of speech about illness. We talk of the man; and we say that he is ill. We talk of the man sick, or the man feeble, the man infected or prostrate, the man decayed or

dying away. And yet it is not he—not the real he, not the real self, that we mean. He—the real he—may be all the time most clear, most strong, most wholesome, most undyingly alive. It is not he who is infected or decaying. It is something which has indeed a strange closeness and affinity with him; something through which alone he has ever expressed and revealed himself; something which we have inevitably identified with him; but it is not the veritable “he.” Nay, it is something even which can be, and which is, in contrast with him. The more afflicted, the more disabled, that outward tabernacle which is his body; so much the less is it an adequate presentment of himself. Less completely, through the very fact of illness or decay, can he be said to be it, or it to be himself.

Perhaps, then, it may be, after all, not the contrast so much between the flower and the patient, as a certain contrast within the patient himself;—between what he seems to be and what he is, between his estate as patient and his true self;—of which the beauty of the flower is so fearlessly eloquent.

But whatever points this contrast between the illness and the man, does necessarily, even in doing so, remind us of a further possibility. If this bodily illness is not an illness of the real self: there *is* an illness of the real self. Physical distress is the outward, and symbolic, illness. The real illness is sin. And there is always this about bodily illness—however little directly connected with evil—that

it has something to show, and to teach, about the illness of sin.

It is not, of course, that illness corresponds with sin. On the contrary, of the two things, it would be rather less far from the truth to say that the time of health is apt to be the time characteristically for sin; and that illness, as such, is rather the time of truth,—of separation from, and healing of, sin. And yet this we know is not true either, except sometimes in part.

Illness, in any case, has much to teach about sin. Much illness results from sin in ways we can trace—not the sin, perhaps, of those who are ill, but the sin of some other. And no one, after all, is ill (as all of us, in our time, are ill), who has never sinned at all. Sometimes sickness and sin are sadly jumbled together:—I am sick because I sin, and my sickness becomes sin in me again:—but at all times the one is an image, and reminding, of the other.

And as sickness is a lesson about sin: so when we speak of medicine and of the physician, of healing and the healer, we know that all the joy of bodily healing does but represent and lead on towards that real recovery out of weakness and sin, which is the freedom and the joy of the spiritual life. And so it is this,—this freedom and joy and splendour of the spiritual life, redeemed, purified, sanctified,—which that beauty of the flower by the sick-bed may suggest. It is not only the immediate contrast. It is not only the brightness of visible—and transitory—beauty. It

was God that clothed the flower. The witness of the flower is not to physical only but to spiritual qualities of beauty. It speaks to us of modesty and simplicity, of purity and innocence, and of the splendour and glory which come of these—the spiritual beauty which will belong to those who are redeemed and sanctified.

And if it speaks to us of things like these, does it speak truly? Our own innocence? our own saintly holiness and joy? Is it to us, either impossible, or delusive, as hope? How often would life be transformed,—how often would sickness, sickness of body and sickness of soul, be transcended and transfigured,—if this, as personal aspiration and hope, could stand in real relation with what we know that we are! Is the dim suggestion of this, in the glory of the flower, a suggestion to us in vain?

And yet this, we know, is the revelation that was made in the Death, and the Life, of Christ. This is the meaning of the Church of Christ, which is the shrine of Christ's Holy Spirit on earth. This is the very breath of the life of the Spirit, amongst the most dull and painful realities of body, which S. Paul and S. John had caught. This is the meaning of the Christian Faith. This is the glory of the Christian life. This is the fragrant outcome of penitent prayer. The music of resolute praise is vocal with this. This is the proper character of the Kingdom of God; and this, we know, on Christ's Word, is in the very midst of us. And

this, again, with all its variety of application and circumstance, — wide as experience, manifold as life,—was summed and sealed, to a S. Paul or S. John, in what was to them, at one and the same moment, the penitent humility, the ardent faith, the over-mastering joy and power, of the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Communion? The life of Communion? There are those to whom it seems—nay it is—as a mere formality. Well: better it may be, perhaps, to avoid it as a mere formality, than to use it as a mere formality; or to abuse it in unblushing and intentional falsehood. But to a S. Paul or S. John there was no touch of formality about it. It was at once the most practical and the most inclusive, and profound, and constraining, of realities. It swept in, and summed up, and symbolized, the whole reality of the transfigured life. It was the earnest of the realization of that of which, sometimes, the sudden glory of the flower gives, to our dulled sense, in a dim, unconscious, uneasy, yet wistful and soothing way, some momentary glimmer.

And still to the Christian who can believe his faith—to the Christian who can sincerely aspire to learn what it is in every vicissitude of life to know “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” as the one reality which includes and interprets and transfigures all; to him at least this life of perpetual communion is the most amazing and inclusive of realities.

It is to him the symbol, and the seal, the expression and ever fresh renewal, of that secret of Divine Hope and Power in the personal life, which consecrates all the activity of health, and illumines all the patience of sickness, with the Spirit, and glory, of the triumphant Cross.

IV

RECURRING HOLY DAYS

“Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.”

—2 PETER i. 19.

IN order to think clearly, we are compelled to classify sharply. We make emphatic distinctions; and if one thing contradicts another, then they are mutually exclusive—they cannot both be true. Thought must choose. Either it is black, or not black. Either it is good, or not good. If it is this, it is not that. If it is that, it is not this. Without such antitheses and exclusions, we could not perhaps reach any clear thought at all.

Nevertheless it is true that living experience, which is much deeper than our analysis of it in clearness of language or thought, is not unfrequently falsifying and correcting these distinctions of ours,—however unassailable their logic may be. And we are baffled sometimes, as we more and more realize that truth is too complex for the simplicity of an alternative between contradictions. There are things which are both sad and not sad; there are actions, and there are men, that are both good and not good, not only at the same moment,

but even, for all that we can distinguish, in the very same subject-matter, and with reference to the same detail of particulars.

But if this simultaneous truth of contradictories is astonishingly possible and real in the ordinary experience of life; nowhere perhaps is it quite so possible or so real, as in that, the highest, the most complicated, the most delicate, region of experience, which we call distinctively spiritual. Spiritual experiences, spiritual processes, spiritual facts will not fit themselves, with any accurate or adequate correspondence, to the sharp distinctions and antitheses which we draw out by the clearness of logical thought. It is not that such distinctions are inapplicable, or irrelevant, to spiritual things. On the contrary, they are indispensable. In thought or learning about spiritual experience, as in all other thought or learning whatever,—we should remain only in endless fog, we should never be articulate at all, save by drawing distinctions sharply, as they are sharply drawn for us in the authoritative words of Scripture. Yet the distinctions, indispensable though they be for any articulate clearness or practical grasp of thought, are hardly ever quite exact. And when we have firmly grasped some broad and trenchant truth, we often dimly realize that something else, that is different from it,—nay, something even which seems to contradict it expressly, is also in its measure true.

The Scripture, which asks indignantly, “Who

hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts?" or, "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil?" or which roundly asserts, "Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering;"—and all that, among a people whose ritual of ceaseless sacrifice was at once divinely, and minutely, and imperatively prescribed: the Scripture, which with emphatic and reiterated negation insists that the "Holy Ghost was not yet fallen upon any one of" those who had just, by the grace of God working in their conscience, been won to the faith of Christ, and openly sanctified in Baptism: the Scripture, again, which can sum up and characterize as the ministration of condemnation, the ministration of death (or as elsewhere "darkness and the shadow of death"), that Divine revelation of the Law of God, of which, almost in the same breath, it says that it "came with glory so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face;" and elsewhere, "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, and live?"¹—the Scripture, I say, in these instances, and in others like these, gives us an unmistakeable (if indirect) warning—not indeed to abstain from definite, or it may be, even sweeping, positive statements: but to remember that such state-

¹ Deut. iv.

ments, though they be true, are never adequate to the complexity of life: that they often indeed, with all their crucial truth and indispensable value, are yet only true in such wise that their seeming contradictories may be true with them also,—may be even a necessary element in their truth.

Thus the man who has found Christ, longs for Christ. The man who has received the Spirit of God, in the Spirit yearns and prays for the presence of the Spirit. This is not an inconsistency, or an untruth. No man indeed is wholly without God. If he were wholly without, even if he could live, he certainly could not draw near,—could not understand, could not desire, could not receive. He would be without all affinity with, or capacity for, good. And, on the other hand, no man, here, is wholly occupied and filled with the Presence of God. Neither the perfect voidness, nor the perfect fulness, is within the experience of men who are made for, yet fall far short of, the glory of God. It is by virtue of having, by virtue of that he has, that any man can, by God's grace, long to have. The very sense of void and longing proves—not the absence really, but a presence. Yet the longing, which witnesses to a presence, is a sense of the absence, and as such becomes a means and condition of the incoming. The longing prayer for the presence of God in the soul, which witnesses at once to both the presence and absence, is not either presence or absence in the fulness of the word. Were the absence consum-

mated, the longing would be impossible. Were the presence consummated, the longing would be unreal. But this longing is among the most possible, the most real, of realities.

Now this thought seems to me to be helpful to us, when we try to realize spiritually the meaning of our recurring anniversaries.

These are the days of immediate prelude to the Christmas Festival. And Christmas is the birth of the Redeemer,—the entrance of very God into the conditions and disabilities of human life,—for the redemption of human life and its conditions. And when we turn from the great corporate aspect of that unique world-transforming historical fact, Christmas speaks to each one of us individually, of the birth of the Divine presence within his own life's consciousness; of God within, claiming, possessing, dominating the private personality. And we think of the echo of words such as those to the Galatians, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you;" or of the unspeakable promises of the great chapters of S. John: and we long to give free course and sway to the thought, the aspiration, the prayer—trembling at once, yet audacious—for the prevailing presence of the Light of Christ; which is surely a necessary part of true Christmas devotion, and which I have chosen this morning to connect with the forward yearning of those words of S. Peter, "Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

With these words I would ask you to take the few verses just before the close of the Revelation, "I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things for the Churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say Come. And he that heareth, let him say Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take of the water of life freely."

But, as we try to think and feel these things, does not the querying thought sometimes come back to us: Does Christmas aspiration yearn for the dawning of the presence of Christ in the soul? And if so, did it not do so last year also? and the year before that? and the ten years, and the twenty years, before that? How can such a thought or prayer be capable, consistently with any meaning, of this constantly recurring reiteration? Why this hollow repetition—a repetition which by the mere fact of repetition, proves its own hollowness? If it was a reality last Christmas, is there any room for it this? Or does the need for it this year prove that it then was unreal? Or is it, this year and last, only spiritual make-believe? Is our effort so to pray now, in itself a proof that our similar efforts before have never yet been realities, and therefore a presumption that they will be no more real now? If it meant what you try to say that it means, how could it in any possible logical consistency come round with the same meaning every year? Rather

you must determine once for all. Either He is in your heart or He is not. If He is not; something more than a careful meditation upon Christmas is needed to make the unutterable change. If He is, cease to pray for Him, as if He were not; and to make, with recurring Christmases, a recurring make-believe. Do not thoughts like these challenge Christian thought sometimes, and dare it to proceed? or is there in them one spark of the light of truth?

Surely the truth is quite different. Any depth, any fulness, any richness of content in such an aspiration now, so far from proving the unreality of all that went before, is now only possible as the result of reality that has gone before. If there were nothing—absolutely nothing—before, there could be nothing now. But just because of the reality which has gone before, the reality which does exist; just because there is with each one of us, in our measure, even now, a Divine indwelling—however overlaid or obscure or unlikely it sometimes seems to others or to us; therefore it is that not in vain we exhort and encourage one another to be earnest in aspiring and in supplication, now and again and again, and Advent after Advent (as each fresh Christmas draws near), more and more urgently, more and more unreservedly; for the birth, the coming,—none the less new because it is also old, none the less essentially future, because it is also more and more abundant in the past,—the coming, the birth, of the presence and sovereignty

of Christ within the soul ; until, in all its ultimate perfection of fulness, “the day dawn, and the day-star arise within our hearts !”

Moreover, this perpetual coincidence of the new with the old, this identification of the future with the past,—their mutual dependence, their mutual coalescing,—not only may we claim, even by familiar analogies within earthly experience, to explain much of the paradox which may, at first sight, seem to be involved in it : but, passing beyond all these, is it not also legitimately suggestive of such conception as we can form of an eternal present, in which whatever is will be also for ever becoming : and perpetuity of becoming will not contradict, or impair, the eternal fulness of what is ?

V

FASTING AS RULE

“Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?”—ISAIAH lviii. 5.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”—1 COR. xiii. 3.

THE word “fast” is a comprehensive word. It may cover a good deal. But without going on at present into any detail, as to what may, or may not, be included in the word, we may take it, I suppose, broadly at least, that the general idea which the word “fast” represents, and which is more or less intelligible to us all, is assumed, as a matter of course, in the Old Testament and in the New, that is, in the example and in the teaching of our Lord personally, to have a necessary place in religious life. The indignant words of the 58th of Isaiah, and the glowing paradox of S. Paul to the Corinthians, distinguish indeed a true from a false,—and denounce the false principle of fasting;—but so far from denying that there is a true fast, they both assume quite absolutely that there is, and that it must be discerned, by those who

love God, from the counterfeit which only discredits it.

The Pharisee who complacently described his religious life, "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess," was indeed hopelessly in the wrong; yet not wrong in the mere fact of introducing tithe or fast at all. Now all the associations and services of Lent force upon every mind, which has moral character enough to be willing to think upon subjects moral or religious at all, the question, What do I ultimately understand or mean as to efforts of moral self-discipline?

Now I suppose that every form of discipline, from the discipline of athletic training to the discipline of the most ascetic monasticism, presents itself, at the first, as a system of rules, imposed, as rules, from without;—you *must* do this, which is, more or less, disagreeable: you must *not* do that, which, of course, you naturally would desire.

This is the first aspect. Is this, then, the true character of discipline? A forced conformity to disagreeable rule,—is this the real essence of the matter? If it were, I suppose it would follow, that the more disagreeable the rule, and the greater the force put upon the self to compel obedience to it, the more perfect would be the discipline. And this has sometimes, in monastic life, been really believed to be true. But in fact all this forced character belongs not to the perfectness of discipline, but to its earliest, its lowest, its most imperfect stages. If it begins as a yoke or a dis-

agreeableness, it only grows towards perfectness, in proportion as it ceases to be either reluctant or disagreeable at all;—in proportion as it is felt, and rejoiced in, as true health and freedom. Why, even in the mere athletic training of the body, so far as it is not exaggerated or artificial, so far as it means living according to the best and truest principles of natural health; we can see at once that the man, in whom the system has reached its perfection, is not the man who is constantly grunting and grumbling at every rule, obeying with reluctance or hardly obeying at all,—and throwing the whole thing aside at the first moment possible: the more cordially a man enters into the spirit of it, the better is his training; and it would reach its perfectness at the point when it was so felt to be identified with health and joy, that it became in effect the wholly voluntary, almost unconscious, rule, or rather instinct, of life.

So, and much more, is it with moral training. Its first experiments, its first aspects, may of course take the form of reluctantly accepted, and hardly obeyed, rule: but the point is that the reluctance and the difficulty belong, not to its excellence, but to the imperfection, and the failure, of it. Disagreeableness, then, for disagreeableness' sake, pain for pain's sake,—whatever place they may hold accidentally, for a time, are not ultimate parts of the idea of Christian self-discipline.

I suppose that of all human beings, those who proverbially endure, in fact, the greatest self-

denial for others, are mothers, or those nurses and teachers of children, who (as Bishop Dupanloup loved to quote) become, to the little ones, like second mothers. But the characteristic point of a mother's service is that it is never reckoned by her as service at all. It is the instinctive out-pouring of a love which can only recognize, only express, only endure, itself, in entire self-expenditure. And again how very much is it, which on occasion, a real friend will bear or do. But how? With grudge and grumbling, and hatred of the trouble all the time? That is just what you would say at once is no reality of bearing or of friendship. The service of love is just not really worthy of the name, so long as it is grudging or difficult. The trouble involved in the service may be great: but it is *not* felt as trouble by the mother, or the nurse, or the true friend. That is just the point of it. Naturally it may be irksome and tiring to the flesh. Yet it *is* their true pleasure. It *is* what they love most of all in the world to do. It is the very outlet and expression, the unburdening and relief, of the love which is hot within them. That is the point of it. Here, then, is a picture which may illustrate for us the meaning of a service which is inwardly true, as service, just in proportion as it ceases to be felt as service: of a discipline which becomes moral health, in proportion as distaste and reluctance melt wholly away from it.

Suppose that a man adopts, as a Lenten rule, something which in itself is morally wholesome for

him ; something which involves a self-denial, self-imposed in any case as a direct homage to goodness ; it may be, also, as an offering of service to man. If, though he keep his rule with rigid stubbornness to the end, he inwardly grumbles against it at the beginning, and grumbles against it in the middle, and hates it as much as ever to the end,—to the moment when, with a great gasp of relief in the sense of freedom, he flings it right away from him : is he morally benefited ? He may have perfectly kept his rule as rule ; but he has wholly lost the opportunity of translating it into love. At its very best and highest, it belonged only to the order of what S. Paul calls giving the body to be burned : it never touched the inward life of charity. If he could have learned a little to like it ; to be thankful for it ; to enjoy the discipline of it ; to welcome the element of unpleasantness in it ; to transform it from unpleasantness to pleasantness by the gladness with which he accepted it and used it, offering it with a grateful and full heart, as an aspiration, as his personal yearning, towards God and goodness and love : how different would it have been in him, from what it was ! And the sign of the difference, the sign of the moral health and the spiritual beauty of it, would have been the fact that it ceased more and more to be a task or burden felt as task or burden : and became instead — like the friend's or mother's self-sacrifice — a relief of pent-up desire, a real joyous outlet of love.

The Pharisee was wrong, not because he kept a rule of self-discipline : but because his rule remained to him only a rule, external, lifeless, loveless ; an observance which could serve to sustain pride, but was not itself sustained by a full heart's love.

Perhaps it will be felt that to say all these things, is in one way to hold up a very high ideal : and that a very high ideal is always apt to be a discouraging thing ; and that most of all to those who, because they are trying, ought not to be discouraged. Perhaps, in another way, this line of thought may seem to be almost too encouraging to those who ought not to be encouraged, because they are not trying specially, and have always thought the call to self-discipline, as such, a mistake.

Well, I am thinking, I own, to some extent of those who do not believe in self-discipline. But in fact I believe, first, that what I have said about the imperfectness of discipline which is felt as reluctance and painfulness, is *true* : and secondly, that this is just the side of truth of which the lax and the indifferent have instinctively a shrewd idea. Now the lax and the indifferent—those who have made, and mean to make, no great moral effort—are certainly not the people to whom you go for profound moral insight as such. Yet men too often see clearly the truth which excuses them most : and in this, at least, the indifferent do see what is true. So far, then, I should like to accept their truth, and agree with it. A disciplinary rule, as

such,—that is, a disciplinary rule which begins and ends by being a disciplinary rule, is likely to be a hollow and worthless observance. For the real heart and essence of the matter is not to be found in rule, as rule; but rather in love, as love. And men who mean to be dutiful have too often forgotten, or at least much obscured, this truth. What then? is this a principle disparaging to the use of disciplinary rules?

I have said, I hope, already enough to make any honest mind shy of avowing the conclusion. Nevertheless I should be sorry to leave the whole matter here: and am glad to look forward to the hope of suggesting, next Sunday morning, one or two thoughts more, which seem still to be needed for the true proportion of it.

Yet at least, for the present, our principle in itself is a true one;—that the very inmost heart of real Christian service or discipline is to be found not in rule, so much, as rule, but in love, as love.

VI

FASTING AS LOVE

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”—S. JOHN xiv. 23.

LAST Sunday morning I endeavoured to urge the significant but not very novel truth that the true secret and character of Christian self-discipline lies not so much in what is outward as in what is inward, not in exactness of observance but in fervour of desire,—not in rule, simply, as rule, but in that which should animate every rule that is living, in love (namely) as love.

It would not be untrue to add that a disciplinary rule which begins and ends only as a disciplinary rule—a fetter outside and irksome to the heart,—may do, and has often done, more harm than good. It does harm to the man himself, because it deceives him, and makes him seem to find holiness, where holiness is not. It does harm to those who are round him, because it does *not* deceive them: because they recognize, and recoil from, an ideal of Christian service which they know to be unreal.

What then? is the moral of all this against disciplinary rule? Because the true spirit of self-

denial is eager desire: because Lenten discipline which is irksome still, which is not the eager expression and relief of love, is for that reason imperfect as Lenten discipline: shall we sweep disciplinary rules and small self-denials away: and say that they belong to the old-fashioned and the external,—but that we have found the very heart of religion elsewhere?

Now this is the very conclusion which has been drawn,—as about things like Lenten self-denial, so about everything else, in Lent or out of it, which presents itself as rigid, exact, severe,—in practice or in thought,—from one end of religious life to the other. For many years past, on one side and on another, men have been rediscovering the fundamental truth, that the spirit of love is everything: and often in the name of this truth, with a naïve simplicity which would be delightful to watch if it were less disastrous practically,—they propose to sweep away at once all precision of doctrine, and all exactness of life, as though these were antithetical to the spirit of love!

It hardly seems to occur to them that it is exactly love, the really devoted eagerness of a full heart, which, just because it is love, must have both definite truth, and uncompromising life. It is love which cannot be content to be merely slipshod and perfunctory. The parent who does not really care about the children may be tolerant to their vices or untruths. But the parent who intensely loves, *cannot* pass by faults. For evil, in those

whose goodness depends on our love, pierces love to the quick. So the child who does not really care for his parents, may think it stupid to be over-scrupulous about details of service or obedience. But the child who intensely loves, *cannot*, in his obeying, be too exact or too prodigal of self. So it is that a service to God which never has felt one touch of the informing fire of love, may think all exactness of doctrine petty or irrelevant, may think almost any mode of life sufficiently dutiful. It is the living fire of a love that at last really dominates, which cannot serve God without caring to know what is true of Him; and which cannot mistake pleasing self for service to God.

If all this is not plain, it must at least occur to those who are full of the thought that the root of religion is love, that this truth of theirs is after all, as I said, not a very novel truth: that it is written in large letters across the very gospel from which come also the sternest lessons of crucifixion and martyrdom: that no man who ever lived has given expression to it so sweeping, so transcendent, so amazing as S. John, to whom it was but one inseparable aspect of a faith, the most sharply dogmatic, and of a practically transfigured life.

Does, then, goodness, which is the eager service of love, require self-denial? Consider, for a moment, the self-denial which was an inherent element in the life of Christ. We do not say that He pursued self-denial for self-denial's sake, as though self-

denial had the positive character of a virtue. But He at least at every moment and in every context was the essential perfection of righteousness. Such righteousness has its own inalienable joy. There never was peace, like the peace of Christ. But none the less, to be essentially righteous in the midst of conditions of human confusion and evil, is to be constantly different, more or less, from the surrounding temper; and such difference has its own pain. It is easy to swim with the stream. It is easy to take, as sufficient, the world's conventional standard of right and wrong. But how often can a man, without pain, in the midst of false standards, be the servant of absolute righteousness and truth? Could Christ in this world's shadows and falsities, being Christ, have been other than the Man of Sorrows?

But we are far from being righteous, or true. On one side, this keeps us from suffering. For we do not mind many things—too often we rather enjoy them,—which should be to us absolute pain. On the other side, even if our surroundings are far better than we are, this same fact makes the service of pure truth and goodness a pain to us. For that service, if it does not contradict our surroundings, contradicts ourselves. It is only by self-contradiction, and effort of painful self-mastery, that we can serve the goodness and truth we desire to serve. And if the fire of love towards goodness and God be aflame in us, it is a fire of love which impels us to, and sustains us under, yea, and by God's grace

makes us really rejoice in, what nevertheless is primarily the struggle, and the difficulty, and the pain, of self-mastering resoluteness, and self-denying effort of service.

The test of love is obedience; and the more over-mastering the love, the more will the obedience,—not as reluctant but as eager, not as a yoke or a burden, but as a passion and a life,—dominate the whole self. It may be true that obedience, which is not love, is valueless. It is certainly true that love which does not express itself, perforce, in obedience, is not love. To the natural self the obedience of Christ seems burdensome. It is only experience of obedience which gives the lie to the instincts of the natural self. It is only experience which makes the religious man realize at last that Christ's yoke *was* easy, and His burden *was* light,—not indeed because it dispensed with self-denial, but because self-denial itself, as the necessary expression of desire towards God, found in its own very suffering a gladness which was greater and deeper than the pain.

What is it but shallowness of moral perception which would so grasp at the truth that love is all inclusive, as to disparage the very instinctive utterances and methods of love? Self-discipline that is chafed at as a yoke, is at most but a stumbling and imperfect beginning; but self-discipline, become part of the character, is love realized in life.

Or take a slightly different illustration. A man is fired with the ambition to master some famous

language; and he finds himself involved by-and-by in the drudgery of detail of alphabet and grammar. But is this, he begins to exclaim, the meaning or true dignity of language? And he asks himself what language really represents? And he feels, with a glow, that language is a means of spiritual intercourse: in it we meet thought to thought, with the wisdom of the wisest; in it we directly thrill to the poetry of Greece or the vision of Hebrew prophets; it is the unseen contact of soul with soul, the sphere in which men become divinely one. How inadequate, he might exclaim, and irrelevant, is this mechanical drudgery of grammatical forms, viewed in the light of an insight into the high possibility and spiritual truth of language!

Well; in a sense it may be irrelevant: but it is indispensable. The end is spiritual. It may be that the means are mechanical. But the great end is not reached, except by the little means.

We too have a language to learn—the language of love. It begins in the very lowly places of earth. It reaches to the uttermost height of heaven. It begins in simple—it may be in stumbling—self-sacrifice: but in its ideal—that is, its real—truth, it is consummated holiness; it is the eternal joy of the presence of God. And who knows what pettiness of formal discipline—what simple self-denying rules and practices—may prove hereafter to have been as a spelling of the alphabet, as a

poring over the grammar — of this eternal language?

Self-mastery, for love, is love's triumph. In things very simple and small the language is begun. The truth of Love is unselfishness. And self-discipline;—is it not as the *grammar* of Love?

VII

PENITENCE

“ . . . Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss.”
—S. Luke xxiii. 40, 41.

You will recognize these as the words of him whom we are accustomed to call the “penitent thief.” In their most direct and primary meaning they are spoken to one who was, in the material sense, quite literally “crucified with Christ.” Have they then no application to those who are not? Those who have learnt from our Lord Himself and from S. Paul, that to be “crucified with Christ” is, in some sense at least, a fundamental truth of the Christian life, will certainly hesitate to put aside as irrelevant to themselves any words which speak, or because they speak, only to men as crucified with Him.

I pass from the immediate thought of the penitent thief. I think rather of the bearing of the words upon the Christian experience of all time. To have personal part with Him in suffering and in shame: to feel His partnership in

suffering and shame with us:—(only with this vast difference, that the suffering and shame which we see Him bearing, which we learn from Him, and enter into [if at all] through Him and with Him,—is, in truth, wholly, only *ours*;—*our* sharp pain of dishonour and sin, seen in Him, learned from Him,—yet *our own*):—this is what the words speak of.

It is one of the most obvious truths about the crucifixion of Christ, that it has many aspects. It appeals to the consciences of many, and in many ways. It is not wise to claim for any of our truest thoughts about it more than this,—that they too are true. Much we can, and are to, discern. But far beyond all discernment or insight of ours, it stands and will stand, an unexhausted marvel of Divine grace and power for ever.

But think of it this morning from the side of the suggestion of the text. It is a mirror to ourselves:—a lesson, a revealing, of the true possibilities, of the essential truth, of ourselves. In what respect does it thus unveil, or mirror, our true selves? In respect of the deep suffering of a true penitent abhorrence of sin. It is a picture—the picture—of the contrite and broken heart. It is a revelation—not to the eye so much as to the conscience—of the possibilities, personal to ourselves; of our own true realities of penitence. I ask you to think of it in this aspect. No one who has devotionally followed the truth of Christ's agony and passion, who has meditated on it,

yearned after it, prayed towards it,—can, I think, be wholly without some real widening and deepening of his own personal, as it were instinctive, possibilities of penitence.

Think, for illustration's sake, of the one, of the family, the parish, or the neighbourhood, who has most definitely, as we say, gone wrong. Bit by bit, the old habits and instincts have been disappearing: and things have grown upon him which we once should have said—which we dare not say now—to be quite unlike himself! Alas! himself now is a self sadly altered. You dare not now trust his temperance, nor his honesty, nor his word. It may be that he is full of acknowledgement of the past, full of confident promise for the future. But if you try to urge upon him that his sorrow and his resolution are vain, unless they are wholly rooted in religion:—he does not rightly understand what you mean. Religion? He thinks, perhaps, that you are bargaining for his willingness to conform to certain outward habits which men choose to call religious: that you want him to put on a certain grave-facedness, to adopt a set of self-depreciatory phrases, to walk to Church and listen dutifully to sermons, or, it may be, to consent to receive the Sacrament. And possibly these things he is ready to do. But as to that which these outward things really mean; as to what you mean when you talk to him about religion—that inward reality of religion, which, being far other than these things, would yet

show itself outwardly in these, and in things like these,—he has hardly an idea. He has, perhaps, a faint idea, or dim memory, that once these things represented to his life something far beyond themselves. But now they are just so many conventional practices of respectability,—well-meant, doubtless, in some, but too largely hypocritical in most. What can make penitence possible to such an one?

And just observe how, in such a case, that one word, “penitence,” if it were but possible to reach it, would include practically everything at once. Penitence in him? Why it would mean a complete transformation of thought, of insight, of capacity of character. It would mean sharp discernment of sinfulness, where sin had been at once most familiar, most complete, and most undiscerned. It would mean perception of holiness, where holiness had been almost a name for cant. It would mean a personal possibility of depth and height, of self-humiliation and discipline, of aspiration and entreaty, of resolve consecrated in faith, and of the power of divine grace in the personal life. It would be a transformation,—a marvel. What could make such a penitence possible to him?

Well—we do not perhaps know. But—has he one—parent, sister, friend, who loves him still and whom he still truly loves? Say, a mother, who knows what sin is, because her eyes have seen a glimpse of the holiness of God. And

has his love for her still power enough in it left, to enable him, when he comes back to her, to understand and feel that, indeed, her heart is broken? not only to know it as fact, but to feel some faint echo, at least, of what the fact means? Her heart broken—with his sin and shame. He, for himself, has forgotten how to give any reality of expression to penitence or meaning to prayer. To him these are now mere words. But can he discern, and just be morally conscious of, the anguish of the shame that is in her? not coldly see with the eyes, but in his hardening conscience catch one glimpse of insight into the meaning of, the anguish that is in her heart for him? Nothing but its overpowering reality in her makes it now real in him at all. And it is but the feeblest echo of her agony of soul that is awakened in him. And yet it is just something: and what it is is of the right kind. It is just a touch, a spark, a dim germinal possibility, within himself and his scanty possibility of love, because it is so large in her love for him. It is just a faint glimmer towards that almost inconceivable change in the whole structure of his consciousness, which—if it *should* come really—you would welcome as the divine reality of a personal penitence. Such reality of personal penitence is surely not less than divine; for it is, in a man who has sinned, the restoration, through condemnation of self, of harmony with goodness and with God.

But is there yet this spark, born in his heart from hers, through the possibility of love? If there is, and he can yet have the wish to identify himself with it; if he will keep near to her, watch her, study her, meditate on the meaning of what he sees in her, love it in her, and love her the more deeply for it; yearn over her, pray towards her, yield himself to live for her, and her love: you, looking on, if you too had love, might say, he will yet be a penitent, that is, he will yet be a saint. Every pang in her fading life—even *it*, with its far off and imperfect light!—is a revelation to him, at once of horror against evil, and of unselfish love. If he *can* meet that love with love: that response in him is the real instinct and beginning of pangs in him too,—pangs of a self-reproach he has never known yet, or could otherwise have known; pangs of a new-born shame of conscience of sin, which is the germ of insight into what religion means, and what holiness can be. In the pangs of his love,—if love can still survive—behold! this symbol of mystery;—that the reality, unto death, of her penitence for him is become the hidden possibility of penitence, of saintliness, in him.

But all this is only an analogy: — and every analogy falls immeasurably short. And yet, perhaps, it is neither impossible, nor unconstructive, as analogy.

Are we not, with all our acknowledgements, and all our resolves, only too like the poor man

of whom we spoke? Neither our confession, nor our purpose, quite touches the rock. We too have sinned—and we too have grown stiff and callous. The very fact of our sin has robbed *us* of the capacity of a piercing penitence. It will not pierce: its edge is blunted: it is not even what it was. And as for our efforts of devotion: it may be very use that makes them hollow. Not the power of *our* penitence—not the power of *our* prayer,—will suffice for deliverance from sin. And is there not one (one far more than a mother in love;—one far holier than the holiest of human intercessors),—in whose pain and shame (His own yet not His own; His own in the undimmed capacity of perfect holiness, not His own because never caused by personal sin): is there not one in whose broken heart (broken for sin, in love;—for the depth of our sin *which we can see only in Him*; in love for us, one echo of which would fill our souls with power): is there not one in whose pain and shame, broken-hearted even unto death, we could read,—if we had the heart,—the mirror of our own possibility of penitence; and in whose love,—when we could worship it in love,—the germs of a penitence, not human only but divine, would begin to be the very reality of ourselves?

I have dwelt upon a merely human analogy. No doubt, while looking at any merely human analogy, we sacrifice much of what is always Divine. Yet I cannot but value a point of view

which, so far as it goes, may help to make us understand the Cross as the mirror, nay, as the perfect reality, for and in every man who can believe in love,—of his own, divinely perfect, penitence. Look to Calvary—meditate on Calvary: there, before your eyes—that it may be in your heart—is your own whole possibility of penitence—your own true penitently suffering, and sorrowful, self.

And I would but remind you finally, that if, even as between a dying mother and her prodigal son, there is some dim—if you will, metaphorical, sense, in which it can be said that the spirit of her love is caught in his love, and the spirit of her sorrow becomes vital as sorrow in him: certainly in the religion of Jesus Christ it is a truth, neither metaphorical nor remote;—rather it may be said to be the most direct, characteristic, spiritual, and transforming of realities;—that to those who know what faith and love mean, to those who in love and faith do feed upon the Body and Blood of that divine human Sacrifice,—the very inmost secret of their personal being, the dominating reality of themselves, is the Spirit of Jesus—crucified and risen.

VIII

THE SECOND ADAM

"The last Adam was made a quickening spirit."—1 COR. xv. 45.

I HAVE tried again and again : and have fallen to pieces in failure. I have been full of hope, and, at times, of confidence. I have prospered for a while, and seemed to grow. Then all has broken again : and I have been face to face only with the sense of impossibility and of shame.

You would encourage me to fresh efforts—you would make fresh appeal to confidence, you would infuse fresh inspiration of strength : but experience has been too continuous, too uniform, too overwhelming. I know what holiness would have done in my place ; I know what it would have been in me before now. I have seen it, have adored it, have desired it : but it is gone from me : I am not, and cannot be, holy. I cannot overcome the force of temptation, the entanglement of sin.

The things which enchain me might not sound formidable, might not seem very much, to another : but they have broken my strength. I have striven against the pressure of them in vain. They threaten to drive me down, from the old hope and

belief in holiness, into a dull surmise, that perhaps the hope of God may not mean hope of holiness; that perhaps He will be content with a character which *I* know to be contemptible; because I have not been able, and cannot now even hope, to be really true to Him.

Is it thus that any Christian soul finds itself in the opening of the Holy Week?

Nay, stand aside for a while; look right away from your struggle and failure; and see. On the field where you have failed,—in the close hand-to-hand struggle with sin in the flesh: there is Another, far unlike you. Never for an instant has the will of spotless holiness failed, or swerved, in Him. Not a dalliance, not a weakness, not a shadow of consent, not a moment's thought of abandonment or of despair, has marred hitherto His perfect mastery of evil. Perfect He seems in Truth, in Love, in Holiness, and therefore in Power:—in the spiritual, which is sovereign over the physical, life. The tremendous power of spiritual and bodily evil, which can afford to treat you with contempt, holding you easily chained and paralyzed with trifles, are arousing themselves against His Holy consciousness, with stress of terror and power unimaginable to you. Yet look in spirit;—and hold your breath for awe while you dare to look, as He goes meekly on, in awe, in stillness, in amazement, in anguish, through insults whose whole sting only innocence could know; through bodily agony of which only the most

exquisite sensitiveness could be capable ; into that darkness of spirit, before which Heaven and earth are dumb. There you cannot penetrate. There the worst that evil can do, of temptation, of assaults, of penal infliction, of devilish destruction, in the body or the soul of man, is done, and done in vain.

Inch by inch, under stress of inconceivable bitterness, the life is torn from Him. Inch by inch ! And every step of anguish in body or soul was only by express consent and permission of His own unswerving will ! There was no power of evil which evil (by His permission) did not put forth then : and all that evil gained by that concentrated effort was this—that not some evil only but all,—evil at its most, evil at its worst, and its mightiest,—was vanquished by good. So Goodness, in human body and life, closed with the concentrated might of evil. So Goodness vanquished and slew sin in the flesh.

Yes : Goodness vanquished evil. But what comfort is this to me, seeing that Another was the vanquisher, not I : and that the vanquished evil is still stronger than I : that I am still vanquished by it. What have I, in my vital experience, to do with this thrilling, yet (to me) despairing picture, of the conquest of sin in the flesh ?

Another the victor, not I. Is it so indeed ? Yet think at least, a little, who and what He was. Now there are those who will say that Jesus Christ was the best, and highest, the most beautiful, the

most ideal, of human characters : but that, in plain fact, He was simply human after all. Just think what would follow for *us*, if this were true. The feats of another man are not my feats. When I am smarting with the ignominy and despair of failure, the fact that another man has succeeded gloriously, only sets him at a wider distance from me : only sharpens and intensifies my disgrace. Sometimes indeed, within very narrow limits, the success of another may help to spur me on, and to draw out the best powers that are in me : but, when my strength is fatally too weak, and my best has ended in failure ; the sinless triumph of another can only serve to accentuate my despair. If the death on the Cross, however victorious over sin, was the victory only of another man, that death seals my doom. Across *my* sense of moral and spiritual failure, *another's* conquest sheds no light of hope.

For another is not I. I must stand apart from him. But with God there is possible to the soul of man a relation which we cannot have with one another. The spirit of man is from God : the Spirit of God is, and shall be, with man, not in proportion to man's independent excellence, but rather to the lowly desire of soul which makes his dependence on God. If Christ be God, it is no longer adequate to truth to say that the victor over sin on Calvary was another, and not I. But the question rises instead, what is my relation to Him ? what meaning is there *for me* in the familiar

language of His Church and of His word, "I in Him: and He in me"?

It is clear that the whole existence of the Church of Christ, the interpretation of its order, its sacraments, its life, is from beginning to end, an exposition of this mystery. The Church is the mystical Body of Christ. The sacrament of admission is membership of His Body. The sacrament of continuous life is feeding upon His Body and His Blood. In His members Christ is formed: we grow up into Him—"from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth . . . maketh increase . . . till we all come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"—"changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."¹

And so to go back from what may seem far-off ideals to that sense of practical failure, and discouragement because of failure, with which we began. There is, it seems, a new and somewhat different question which we have to put to ourselves—not so much how far *we* are triumphing in the conflict with evil: as rather how humble and how close is our clinging to the personal relation with Jesus Christ. These two things will not of course be ultimately distinct. The Spirit of Christ in us will be perfect moral victory. But mean-

¹ Eph. iv. 13, 16; 1 John i. 3; 2 Cor. iii. 18.

while they may seem to be not distinct only but even in the sharpest contrast. That lowness of spirit which comes inevitably perhaps from the sense of reiterated failure : consider two very widely different results into which it may easily lead. On the one hand, it is often itself the very crisis of temptation. In one way or another some besetting evil has obtained many advantages against us. They in themselves no doubt are sad enough. But if only our courage and faith remained unimpaired, by God's grace we should win through them yet. The critical question with us is what effect the sense of failure will have on our courage and faith. Not the failures themselves, however frequent or however sad, but the temptation, which grows out of failure, to despondency and abandonment of ideal, this is the real stress of trial and danger. And so failure and sadness become fatal : not really because they are so in themselves, but because, through them, the spirit of falsehood has persuaded us to throw away arms and courage, and accept defeat, which only our cowardly acceptance makes irrevocable.

On the other hand is it not quite as possible, and for baptized Christian people more reasonable by far,—that the very discouragement itself, when our most sanguine and confident efforts seem to fail, should rather lead us on—not into the pride of disappointment and sullenness, but rather to a lowlier self-abasement, and more yearning dependence and entreaty towards God,

I have tried again and again; and have fallen to pieces in failure. I remain face to face with the sense of impossibility and shame. Is it so? Then, and for this cause, instead of turning away in disappointment and despair, I will creep so much the nearer, and in lowlier confession of helplessness, towards that Cross of Christ, which as I need it more vitally and more totally, will become more and more the one yearning and hope of my heart. The failures which drive me back with sadder but more earnest dependence, to a strength and conquest which are not in me, shall after all be made to minister not to my ruin, but to my purification. If more and more my heart and my faith be on Him; though every resolve and effort of mine seem to fail; His presence in me shall be, even in my weakness, strength: His presence in me, embraced more and more under pressure of what would otherwise be despair, shall, in my uttermost inanition of self, be found to be Divine victory,—the victory of Almighty Goodness and Love.

IX

THE CUP OF THE LORD

"... Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? . . ."

—S. MARK x. 38

WHATEVER else we may feel about these words, I do not think we shall feel that they are addressed to the sons of Zebedee only. Like many other words, whose first historical use was far away from us, they come close home to our own hearts and consciences. It is a real, personal, and living question: and its challenge is to ourselves.

Can ye drink of the Cup that I drink of? Can ye? To drink with Him: and share with Him in drinking? What does it mean? For indeed this cup is mingled very wonderfully.

In its first aspect it seems to stand for something that is, naturally, at least, very terrible. Can ye bear to drink deep of the draught of pain? To know what the sorest wounding of heart and spirit mean? Partnership in Christ's Cup is partnership, surely, in sorrow. How can *they* claim to share His cup with Him, who will disdain for themselves the personal reality of suffering?

It does mean suffering in fact. Who ever was consummated in oneness with Christ, without some

touch, in his own inmost soul, of the exceeding bitterness of the Passion? It does mean suffering always, in some part. In many cases, or at many times, it has meant, and does mean, the extremest and most penetrating anguish of spirit. Is it so, that we will not, at any price, face this—for ourselves? Surely, to refuse for ourselves the possibility of this, is to refuse beforehand, for ourselves, the fellowship of His cup. The suffering of long weakness and illness, the sharp edge of the bereavement that seems most cruel—these, after all, are but specimens (yet specimens how familiar and how frequent!) of the way in which amongst us, every year, Christ's anguish is cutting deep into the spirits of men. And we ourselves? Are *we* ready? or dare we ask to be left aside?

Yet not all anguish is a sharing of His Cup. It must be suffering not rebelled against; suffering that we are learning to accept. Its very differentia lies here. It is, or it has to become, willingness in suffering, consecration of suffering, and self-consecration through suffering. We too indeed may shrink back before the presence of it: nay, not only *may*; we *shall* shrink, we even *must* shrink—if we are humanly sensitive, if we are human aright. He, Whose human nature was divinely perfect, shrank—"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me."¹ But we have also to learn the true sincerity of that other prayer—"O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me

¹ Matt. xxvi. 39-42.

except I drink it, Thy will be done." It is, then, suffering with Christ, for Christ's sake, accepted as a consecrating sacrifice of spirit. It is the communion of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

But it sounds strange to speak thus of the Cup of the Lord. If "In the hand of the Lord there is a Cup"—is it not this which is overflowing with joy? "What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Is it not the cup of our salvation, the cup which "shall be full" with blessing and gladness? Is it not the cup of transcendent victory? the cup of everlasting glory and holiness? Yes, it is this indeed,—this and this only, which possesses, and which means, "the fulness of joy." This is the true transfiguration of the self; the true ennobling and enabling unto holiness of will: and unto that deep joy, which is an inalienable aspect of true holiness of will. Real joy is not a sort of external sunshine, in which the unholy—if they be but admitted—could bask. It is an outcome, or aspect, of holiness. And it is realized, not so much by the abolition of all things that cause sorrow: as by the consecration and transfiguring of sorrow that has been deeply felt as sorrow indeed. It is not so much a dispensation from sorrow. Rather it is sorrow accepted, conquered, illumined, beatified. But conquered it *is* effectually and transmuted into blessing. To share the Lord's cup is to share His victory, His holiness, and His joy.

But it may be asked, perhaps, Am I not getting confused? When I speak thus of His cup, what is it that I am speaking of? Is it the Cup which He drained, or the Cup which He instituted? Is it the cup of the Passion, or the cup of the Eucharist? And the partnership of Christian life with Him, is it partnership in His Cross, or in His glory?

It may be asked—But the answer will not be careful so much to discriminate between the two, as to insist that, after all, the two are one. For the Eucharist is the Communion of the Passion, which is also the triumph, of Jesus Christ. *On the Cross* Righteousness, in Humanity, conquered sin: and Death is the condition of Resurrection. “If we have been planted together in the likeness of His Death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection” . . . “If we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him.”¹ “This cup is the new testament in my Blood.” “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ?”² Blood is not *simply* life: not life apart from its special consecration in dying.

The Eucharist is the communion of the Passion. The power of the Passion is the power of the Eucharist. The victory of the Passion is the victory of the Eucharist. The joy of the Passion is the joy of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the communion of the Passion. If it were not so it would be hope and joy—to those

¹ Rom. vi. 5-8,

² 1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 25,

perhaps who had not sinned, so far as they had not sinned : but not to those in whom the presence and the power of sin are *real*,—in whom real sin is still really to be broken and crushed.

Those who enter into the devout communicant life, have found indeed the one real secret of joy : for they have the life of Christ. But it is no less also true that those who enter into the devout communicant life, are themselves self-consecrated beforehand to suffering,—to wring joy out of suffering, and transfigure suffering into joy : for the life of Christ which they share is life by dying. They are consecrated to fellowship with His Passion ; that their fellowship in His glory may be real.

Just as, if we look back to the Old dispensation, we are taught to recognize that the figure of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is not simply isolated, but is rather the embodiment, as well as the crowning, of all that pointed Christward in the life of Israel : so, looking onward from Calvary, we see again that all life in the Christian Church that outflows from Calvary, so far as it is true, is included within, not detached from, the fulness of Christ.

I need not stay to ask whether such a thought as I have been urging is presumptuous ? Presumptuous ? Rather it is imperative :—a divine command, because a divine necessity. Remember that even the aspiration of the sons of Zebedee,—with all its boldness of ambition and ignorance,—was yet not so much reproved, as encouraged, and indeed fulfilled.

But perhaps there is another question which is more likely to suggest itself: the question not whether it is too good for us: but whether, upon such terms, we do really desire it. If we say that the life of communion is a consecration—to suffering as well as to joy; to suffering as condition and method of joy;—is this to discourage from the life of communion? Does the will, not too resolute before, begin to falter? We think we will run away, do we? We will not face this cup of communion with the Passion of Christ?

And whither, then, will we run? We will not face this cup of *κοινωνία*, which is also the cup of blessing? we will not share with Christ? Then will we face the cup of our own mortal anguish,—the extremest anguish of the life and spirit,—apart from Christ: alone, unaided,—unto utter death? Do we think that by refusing Christ, and the cup of communion with His Passion, we shall escape all suffering for ourselves? We can refuse indeed the consecration of suffering: we can refuse the transfiguration of suffering into glory and joy: we can refuse the suffering which is unto life: but only to leave all the suffering unconsecrated, unilluminated, untransfigured, as a burthen intolerable, hopeless,—unto death.

It is not suffering, but suffering unconsecrated, which is to man's life a curse. Very very long ago were the words of alternative set before Israel: words which speak to us this day, with whatever deepened significance, yet with no less living direct-

ness than at first in the book of Deuteronomy—"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing ; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live : That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him : *for He is thy life and the length of thy days.*"

¹ Deut. xxx. 19 20.

X

THE EVENING

“When the even was come.”—S. MATT. xxvii. 57.

WHAT a contrast is here ! After wild excitement, after fierce uproar, after hate and cruelty, after depths inscrutable of sorrow and of pain : there is now—stillness.

Stillness ? silence ? Many of the most wonderful moments of human experience are moments of silence. But think what a contrast there may be between silence and silence ! There is the lurid suspense, breathless, unnatural, before the crash of the storm, before the thrill of the earthquake, or, there is the calm fair stillness, when the storm is over, and the dim stars peep out, and the cool air faintly stirs. There is the stillness of prayer, in its rare intensity, when earth joins with heaven : and there is the stealthiness of guilt, in the moment before consummation of appalling sin. There is the unearthly calmness of a holy deathbed ; and the blanched and horrible silence of a sentence of death. There is the hushed softness of a sleeping infant ; and the rigid stillness of the dead.

“When the even was come.” It is the early evening that we are speaking of as yet. Joseph of Arimathæa, at such a moment—(strange paradox of the power that is in suffering!)—at such a moment of fear, “finding his courage,” begs Pilate for the boon of the Body of the Dead.¹ Nicodemus too, who had been like him in timidity, is by his side now in courage, and laden with a great weight of myrrh and aloes. And so, when they have lowered the Body gently from the Cross,—there in the chamber of the rock-hewn tomb,—with most tender reverence, yet in haste, they wash, they soften, they bind, those most holy limbs, with the clean linen cloths, and the rich spices.

And the women,—the women who had really loved,—and who, because of their womanly thoroughness of love, had least of all faltered in courage,—they are hovering near,—to watch,—and “behold the tomb, and how His Body is laid.”²

There is one picture, then. Just glance by contrast, at another. For at that very same time, we are told,³ a noisy throng is ready, with all demonstration of festivity and eagerness, to follow the delegates from the Sanhedrim to the ceremony of cutting the Passover sheaf⁴—the sheaf of the first fruits, to be waved before

¹ John xix. 39.

² Luke xxiii. 55.

³ See Dr Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," II. 618-9.

⁴ Lev. xxiii. 10.

the Lord. "Just as the sun goes down," is the sheaf to be cut—and they will cut it with all fulness of circumstance—for the ceremony of the morrow.

Let them go,—in glad procession, with their noise and excitement! But "the sheaf of the first fruits to be waved before the Lord":—it is elsewhere than in the midst of the foolish crowd. Did they see one another as they went—the festive procession, elate, tumultuous; and that tiny knot of mourners, heart-stricken with the appalling tragedy of the day, and awed now, at eventide, by the exceeding solemnity of their silent work with the Dead?

So the sun goes down, and the darkness is closing in. The darkness; and, by degrees, the silence. The city is thronged. Its ten thousand discordant noises, may be *slow* on such a night to be quieted, but even they, one by one, by degrees, die away: and the curtain of night settles down on the first Good Friday. The curtain of night, with its darkness,—its silence,—so separating, so searching,—it is ever a parable of the silent summons of a life, through death, into judgement.

What are they doing now, or thinking, or feeling, in waking or in sleep, consciously or unconsciously,—those who have been abroad this tremendous day?

Pontius Pilatus the governor; much has happened this day for him. It is over now. The pressure of the tumultuous Jewish crowd,

which gave edge to the insistent logic of those resolute, mock-loyal, priests: it is all relaxed now. And the deed is done. And the prisoner is dead. And the centurion in charge has made his report in respect of the execution; a report which has linked itself surely on, in a strange way, to some feelings more than disquieting,—to some gleams of thought, or conscience—un-thinkable, appalling, in the secrecy of the governor's soul this night.

There is the centurion—with that indelible impression upon his soul; that transforming, amazing, consciousness; which cannot, surely, but make this night a new beginning of life, and thought, and desire, and possibility, to him.

There are the soldiers in garrison; the chief actors in the physical scene, the men who bound and scourged, and mocked, and drove along the way, and nailed and fixed, and jeered, and watched: and one among them there is, who with the hyssop and the sponge, did, in fact, the last service that ever was done, in His mortal Body, to Jesus, the Life of the world. What did he feel *then*, in doing it? and what of him *now*? now in the dark and the silence? and what of his comrades round him?

And there are Annas and Caiaphas, the priests and the councillors,—the men whose hearts and wills really plotted, really did the deed. It is done now. It cost them something to carry the governor. But they have succeeded at last,

—succeeded to the uttermost end. All is well now. *Is all well now?* As the night draws on, and they one by one, triumphant, exhausted, yield to the influence of the darkness, and the stillness; what exactly does it all mean to them?

And there are those, Jews from all parts of the earth, who have heard before, who have wondered to-day; the general multitude;—some hardened, are they? of heart; surely many touched? what does the stillness of the night bring to all these?

And there are Nicodemus, and Joseph, and the women: and there are the apostles who scattered and fled: there is Simon Peter with that sharp pain in his conscience: there are S. John and the Blessed Virgin Mary, dedicated to mutual service by their dying Lord's express words. Upon them all comes the pause and the silence, that searching pause and silence of the night.

Shall we venture to add one thought more? In a somewhat different sense—behind the veil—*at rest*: with a rest which we know not even how to conceive;—is the soul of the Penitent thief, with Jesus, in Paradise.

With all their infinite varieties we think of them—all stilled now;—so far alike; all hushed with the silence of the night: but oh! how immeasurable the chasms of discrepancy which that one uniform-seeming silence contains! From

Pontius Pilate to the beloved S. John : from the accusing priests to the Magdalen or the Blessed Mother : what gulfs of contrast are there, not to be bridged, in that same restfulness of silence which encompasses them all !

And so, for us too, another Good Friday is ended ; and the night begins to close over it. Who can measure the priceless opportunity of a Good Friday to the soul that is really sincere in its effort of worship ? What have our Good Fridays been ? what has *this* one been to us ? On how many different ways of spending Good Friday does the same, silencing and searching, darkness close ? I need not speak here of those who have spent the day in intemperance or sin ; nor of those who, without excess, without what we know for sin, have yet given it to purely animal refreshment and ease. Others doubtless there are who have not used it at all : who have done on it, because it was Good Friday, merely nothing. But even amongst those who respect the day, and would feel it strange not to be at Church, what a difference often is there ! So much earnest reality in one (it may be, so little in another !)—of personal discipline and of personal prayer ! Are there not those who have practised (it may be) their abstinence, yet without real consecration or humility of will : those who have listened to, or have joined in, hymns, lessons, prayers, as spectators who see and approve, yet

have not in sincerity of penitence or effort of entreaty, caught any spiritual echo, within their own personal character and lives, of the Cross they profess to worship? And are there not meanwhile those who have been indeed with Christ in all their life of body and spirit to-day? The real love of the Cross cannot, to those who have it, remain as a thing outside of, and separable from, themselves. It will enter into—it will transform—what they are. It is not real in the end, to those whose inmost spirit is unchanged by it. Sooner or later, if belief and devotion be real, they will dominate, they will shine through, what the believer is.

For ourselves, if we have failed: if we have been slack in character and worship,—and therefore, so far, insincere, — while others, close beside us, made, what we failed to make, the real personal self-controlling moral effort, the real humiliation of penitent confession, the real uplifting of spirit in loving and longing: we will remember at least, as the silence closes in over our finished Good Friday, the blessing of those who, even at the last moment, like S. Peter, catch—and when they catch, recognize and welcome to the depth of their hearts,—the pleading reproach of their Lord as He turns, and looks upon them; and who so pass out, even into the night, with hearts melted and weeping at last.

XI

TRIUMPHANT DEATH

“. . . King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. . . .”—REV. xix. 16.

EASTER is the interpretation of Good Friday. The significance of the Cross is revealed in the Resurrection.

The Resurrection is not so much a mere sequel to the Cross : or a reversal of the Cross : or a subsequent reward, because of the endurance of the Cross. Rather it is a revealing of what the Cross already was.

Think for a moment of the Cross in the light of the Resurrection. Here at least it is clearly revealed to us, if we could not have seen clearly before, that, in very truth, Calvary was not an overthrow so much as a victory : that the Cross was not a gibbet so much as a throne : that the suffering Jesus was not a victim so much as a Priest and a King.

It is not that this, the true, significance was without its testifying witness even before. The very hatred of the Jews, in that cry Crucify, Crucify ! was a tribute to—for it was evoked by—the sovereign royalty of the presence of goodness in

Him. The despair of Judas was a testimony, in the most terrible form, to the truth that He who had been betrayed was Lord and King. The deepening awe of Pilate, in itself throughout most remarkable, found a strange avenue of utterance (yet an utterance certainly not wholly insincere) in the form of title placed so peremptorily at the head of the Cross,—Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. The salutation of the soldiers, which began in savage mockery, ended in the centurion's awestruck confession of the God-like righteousness of Christ. Again; the faith of the penitent thief, the courage of Joseph of Arimathæa, the open discipleship of Nicodemus; and the darkness, and the earthquake, and the rent veil, and the opened graves; all these, from their different sides, conspired to reveal—even in the scene of Calvary itself,—a victory and a glory, a throne and a king!

The very death was essentially the climax of the victory of holiness.

And this fact emphasizes, or reveals to us, the truth, that the death, even on Calvary, never meant death only as death. As death, His atoning work could not have ended. For if it had ended in death, such death would have meant, and been, precisely the very opposite of what the death, in true fact, meant and was. Death, simply as death, would have been the overthrow, and the defeat, of life. But *this* death was inherently victory—the consecration, the crowning, the glorifying power, of life. The death is a point, a process—the crucial

process and point—in the divine victory of divinely victorious life. The death taken apart, the death lingered in as an end, would not only be inadequate or incomplete : but it would precisely contradict its own vital significance. This death is not an infliction, a vengeance, an overthrow. It is the consummation of the inherent victory—over all the concentrated force of evil,—of inherent righteousness : righteousness which under the conditions of human fallenness, could only be absolutely righteous, *thus*. For this alone was the final conquering and crushing of the last possibilities of temptation or sin, which is the consummation of righteousness as victory.

Even then when we look at Calvary, commemorate Calvary, identify ourselves with Calvary ; Calvary must mean not so much the mere fact of the death, as the triumphant character, the inherent victory, of the death. What we discern there, in the insight of Christian faith, is not so much Christ as dead ; but Christ as, through dying, consummating the victory of holiness and life for ever.

It is this essentially, life, victory, holiness, glory : this—revealed it may be in the Resurrection, crowned in the Ascension : but it is this which as life, as victory, is already secured, in the moment, in the fact, of death. Even on Calvary the death is not a death of panic, or of mourning—save to those who know not, as yet, what it means. But to those who know, it is the victory of goodness ; it is

the glory of life ; it is the true atonement—the at-one-ment—of man with God.

And it is all this—for us ! It is all this, that the Spirit of the Crucified, the Spirit of victorious goodness—may become real in us : nay, may become,—we cannot but say it in faith,—the very deepest reality of what we ourselves either are, or are to be !

It is this which is before our eyes : this which we adore, in reverent wonder, to-day : this, our own hope, our own faith, our own ideal, our own destiny : this death of the Cross as victory ; this victory, as the power which is to possess and transform ourselves.

The victory of the Cross *our* victory. Not by any power of imitation. We cannot imitate it. Not by successful achievement on our part. We have no power to achieve. No ; but rather by divine imparting on His side ; and by dutiful receiving, in spirit, through faith, on ours. A spiritual impartation—a spiritual receiving—to assimilate, to use, by faith. This is the meaning of all our Churchmanship. This is the meaning of our initiation, in Baptism, into membership of Christ. This is the meaning of our Confirmation, by the Spirit. This is the meaning of our early lessons in prayer, and of the whole discipline of the religious life. This, above all, is the direct meaning of the Communion of His Body and Blood.

It is this, this exactly. It is, in Spirit, through faith, the very channel and method of our feeding upon His sacrifice ; the drawing-up into ourselves,

as nutriment, as sustenance, of the very Humanity which, in Him, so triumphed, by dying, over sin. It is our appointed way of living on Him (by means which have indeed a material place, but whose whole real essence is spiritual), that He in us and for us, that we in Him and by Him, may be triumphant over sin, the sin that is in ourselves,—not in our strength, but in His.

How unwise are those who will not draw near—for the practice of the regular Communicant life; who foolishly persist in looking upon it—either as a piece of mechanical service, a merely ceremonial observance; or as an attempted claim to some special favour and goodness,—a bribe to blind the eyes of ourselves or of God withal.

No. To us it is none of these things. It is no mechanical duty. It is no mechanical righteousness. It is what it is, through spiritual conditions, in the region of Spirit. But to the Spirit, in the Spirit, by the Spirit, it is in very deed and truth that imparted gift, that imparted personal possibility, that benediction of Divine indwelling, which is the true transformation of our poor selves into the image and Spirit of our Lord; into the image and Spirit of Humanity, sinless, victorious, perfected, through the inherent Victory of the Cross, through the inherent Royalty of the King—who conquered, and reigned, by dying.

XII

EASTER JOY

“ . . . Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.”
—S. JOHN XX. 20.

THE gladness of Easter day. It is hardly too much to say that gladness is the central point of all. If we cannot respond to the call of Easter with any inward serenity, with any real gladness in the heart; can we, in virtue of any other acts or observances, be said to have felt the Easter of a Christian at all? Not this or that custom, observance, or service, but vital gladness of spirit, is the true personal celebration of Easter.

Such vital gladness is not merely spontaneous. As, in the general life, the studied habit of *praise* is a schooling in, and to, joy: so Easter joy is *practised* by the deliberate effort of Easter praise. Perhaps it may safely be said that no one will have caught the note of real Easter joy, who has not first schooled his limbs, his life, his spirit, to the resolute attitude and utterance of hearty thanksgiving. This does not merely mean bearing passive part in a service which ritually symbolizes thanksgiving: it means the positive effort, the personal uplifting and outpouring of

spirit (be it public or private), in a conscious utterance of praise that is all one's own. I have made *no* personal act of Easter thanksgiving?—Then how can my spirit echo to Easter joy?

Now real joy is harder than real sorrow. It is harder to preach; it is harder to receive. It is harder to correspond rightly with a festival than with a fast; harder to rise to the meaning of praise than of penitence.

And why so? It is certainly not that penitence is more welcome. Far from that. But penitence, however unwelcome, is, to most of us, very intelligible. Even while we shrink back from pain, we can see its meaning, we can feel its fitness. It does correspond with our experience. Of weakness and of failure we are unmistakably conscious. The call to penitence, so far, explains itself. And our penitence, so far as it has at all gone, has at least had the touch about it of a real experience. No great effort is needed, of spiritual imagination, or of transcendent faith, to put a meaning into the conception of penitence, or to justify the relation of pain to sin.

But when those who are conscious of their own incapacity, conscious of their own sin, are summoned to the joy of spiritual Victory,—the Resurrection from Death, the triumph over sin; such a call does not match their experience; it strikes a note to which their own consciousness cannot easily respond. They may be ready enough to put away Lent, and drop back to

the common level of worldly comfortableness : but the deep joy of Easter,—what does it mean to them ?

In truth it requires a great effort, an effort of imagination, and an effort of belief. Let me put it in this way. We shall recognize, perhaps, how wonderfully a servant of Christ, in the time of his struggle, and the depression which is so often the atmosphere of struggle, might be kindled again to strength and brightness of heart, if he had before the eyes of his heart,—not as a mocking illusion, but as a vision which he knew to be real and true,—the veritable picture of his own final victory, his personal consummation in righteousness. To a Sintram, riding into his valley of horrors, what would it not mean if he should see in his heart, and his heart go out in rapture of faith and love because he saw, the very image of his own salvation ? To be able beforehand to believe, and believing to adore, the personal consummation : this is itself great part of the spiritual help by which the consummation is worked out.

Take the opposite side of the thought in two very familiar lines ;

“ So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.”

I do not say that the pain would be less remorseful, or would be less pain, to those who could believe in the vision of the consummation of their own penitence : it would be more, not less : but

the pain would be transformed in such a belief, from a spiritual discouragement to a spiritual strength. Only think what it would be to us, to have as it were projected before the eyes of our hearts, the living image of our own triumphant holiness! Would it not be, even to the most dispirited, a very inspiration of hope and of light?

All this is really within the vision offered to faith on Easter day. The joy of Easter is the joy of human victory, human righteousness absolutely triumphant over death, and over sin. It is human righteousness in the Person of Christ; that, by our union with Him, it may be really personal to each one of ourselves. In Him first we see it; and seeing believe in it; and believing fall in love with it; and in love cling to and adore it. So to see it in Him, as manifest visibly before our eyes, and believe and adore and love; is itself a step towards our own realizing that which we believe, and being wrought into the likeness of that with which we are in love. For those who believe in Him, and cling in love, are taken up, through faith and love, into Himself. To those who believe—and love, His consummated victory is their own victory, and His righteousness is their own righteousness. Real human righteousness,—even our own: the consummation—our own consummation—of righteousness: to contemplate it in faith, to believe it in our hearts, to fasten our adoring love upon it; this is no small step towards its reality in ourselves. Outside ourselves

first we contemplate, love, and adore; that in the very act of loving contemplation, its reflection within ourselves may be deepened and brightened!

There it is! believe it! adore it! the real—our own real—consummation, not another's only! Easter thanksgiving is thanksgiving, in faith, for what, *to faith's apprehension*, is a personal—our personal—fulness and triumph of righteousness, for us, and in us, conquering and crushing sin.

It is not this indeed as *mere* prophecy: not as something which is our blind destiny, or which we cannot miss: but as something displayed before our hearts as our own real moral possibility: something offered us first to contemplate, be in love with, and adore; something, which as faith deepens, and loving desire intensifies, shall be, by God's grace, more and more, the very animating spirit of our being, of ourselves.

“Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.” So to see the Lord with the eye of faith is itself an earnest and a foretaste of a real personal entering into the joy of the Lord

XIII

RESURRECTION

“But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”—1 COR. xv. 13, 14.

THERE are those perhaps to whom the experience of life is like a dream of perpetual hopefulness. They need no uplifting, for they are not downcast, and thoughts of comfort come after all but strangely to those who are already light of heart.

Others there are to whom the bracing energy of hopefulness seems a difficult thing: difficult perhaps in the things of material life; in respect of spiritual growth more difficult still. The spring of power which belongs to a sanguine hopefulness—this they recognize: the ebbing of force which results too surely from discouragement—this they emphatically know: but to recognize good is not always to possess it; and to know is not always to avoid, harm. On the contrary, desire as they may, experience appears to be overwhelmingly against them; so against them, that in the face of such experience of failure, even desire itself begins to die away. Experience seems fixed and strong against them,

They achieve, and have achieved, so little! They have fallen, and do fall, back so much! Their very capacity—for achieving, for trying, for not failing, grows itself (so it seems) less and less.

So, as they look at the things which make their life, the things whose record should be the encouraging history of their growth; behold! the whole texture and process of them seem to them to be—not the onwardness of expanding growth and life, but rather the narrowing in of progressive decadence, the enfeeblement of a gradually, but too surely, approaching death!

O for a fresh burst of life! a re-creation of power! a new spring of possibilities! Is not this, oftentimes, the very cry of the soul? a cry especially and distinctively for *this*: not for the recovering of something which we once consciously were, but for the power of becoming what we never were;—for something to make us what we are, and were, not: not for an incentive to bring out the best that is in us, but for a creative power to enkindle a good in us which is not there. This is the point of our craving; not something which would show (as it were) our best possibility, but something to burst, for us, all the limits of what is possible: something to break the fetters of our moral impotence and dying; something to deliver us really out of ourselves, and shatter the bonds which paralyze our limbs, and threaten to strangle (as it were) the very breath of our life! This is a cry—not for what seems either at hand or natural, but for what seems

impossible and contradictory : not merely for healing in sickness, but for resurrection from dying, or from death ! The shrivelling leaves, the dead stick — can it become a living plant again ? The parched flesh, the dry bones—can they stand up a living army again ? “O Lord God, Thou knowest !”¹

But this *is*, oftentimes, is it not ? what the souls of men seem to cry for ; the touch of a Divine power, not to encourage merely but to transform them. And this cry of theirs is but mocked, if you offer them remedies and hopes which are merely natural. It is just the impossible element, just the miraculous touch, just the extreme contradiction to the necessities of experience,—the one definitely impossible contradiction,—such as the springing-up of life out of death, which seems, in its very impossibility, to be the one thing that could possibly match their need.

Now if this strain of thought be in any way real to us, it may strike us at least as remarkable, that it is one supreme fact, just of this very character,—a supernatural breaking away of all the fetters of naturalness, a miraculous bursting forth of impossible possibility, a Divine reversal of all existing conditions, just when they seemed irreversibly fixed and completed for ever, a Resurrection from consummated death, which is the one characteristic faith upon which the entire fabric of Christianity hangs. How emphatic is the insistence

¹ Ezek. xxxvii, 3.

of S. Paul ! “ If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen : and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” All apostolic preaching, and all Christian faith, from end to end absolutely depend upon the very truth of Christ’s resurrection : and the fact of Christ’s resurrection is not true, unless it is true in such wise as to carry with it as part of its truth, the general reality of the Resurrection of men, “ for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised.” “ Resurrection from the dead.” To us at least it is—how could it be otherwise ! a familiar phrase and thought. We have believed it, in some sense, all our lives—as long perhaps as we have been able to put any meaning into “ death.” And we are familiar with analogies in the natural world, of corn or fruit, of grub or chrysalis, which lead thought a little way towards the idea of resurrection. And it may be that we nurse in memory some more secret experiences, which in their own way deepen in our souls the luminous certainty that Resurrection is indeed at once both a necessity and a fact. But for these very reasons, and because it is in a sense both familiar and sure, it may be the more worth while to insist on recalling to mind, how truly in itself,—apart from those illumining certainties which lie in the very roots of our religion,—it does indeed contradict the whole drift, and possibility, of experience that is merely natural. Gradual decay is consummated in death. Everything so far, is progressive, orderly, complete.

There is no hope then, because there is no possibility. It is over and done.

What is Resurrection out of death, but the divine reversal of every condition that exists—just when reversal has to all natural experience ceased to be any longer even possible? It is the complete contradiction of physical evidence. It is the Divine shattering of merely natural possibility. And it is the fact, not in respect of Christ only, but of Humanity in Christ, with which the entire Christian Gospel stands or falls. If, of Christ, and in Christ, of Humanity, it be not a fact; then, as S. Paul insists, there is nothing left, in Apostles' teaching, or in Christian faith.

Now the fact, thus crucial to S. Paul, is no doubt first and foremost an overt fact of history long ago, made manifest to Christian consciousness even within the physical conditions of this life, in the Person of Jesus Christ; and grasped with unhesitating Christian certainty, in respect of those who thenceforward lived and died for Him. But because it is this first; because if it is not true here it is not true anywhere;—is it therefore true only thus; only as contradicting the finality of the grave? Or can it be true in this material and historical sense, and not true *also* in the moral life? Has the Christian faith in Resurrection no place in moral experience?—Is it not rather a vital possibility, in some aspects one might almost say the essential basis, of the moral life and hope? The Divine reversal of conditions that seemed hopeless and

final : the re-birth of possibilities proved before by dreary experience to be impossible : the creative touch of power where no power was : the spring of hope against hope : the revival, and more than revival, of moral life ; so do I believe in resurrection, even from the dead, as the kernel and the glory of Christian faith, as not to look for it, not to believe in it, *here ?*

There is life from death, within as well as without ; of the soul as well as of the body. It is life by Divine power alone. It is the impossible possibility, the miraculous touch, when natural experience seemed to see all things only dying ; nay, even seemed to see accomplished death. Remember how in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, this is precisely the lesson which is drawn out, when God through the prophet condescends to explain His own teaching : " He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel : behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost : we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God : behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land : then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed

it, saith the Lord.”¹ Is there *here* no application of the vision of Resurrection to the creative newness of life within? Or do we not rightly seem to hear an echo of the same thought, when we read in the touching words of that parable than which none perhaps is more characteristic of the Christian Gospel, “Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry : for this my son was dead and is alive again : he was lost, and is found.”²

My belief, then, in Resurrection includes Resurrection *within*. It is a spring of hope even against hope : an imperishable confidence in Divine power : and therefore despite of overthrow, a readiness, undaunted and perpetual, to resolve and begin afresh and afresh for ever. Doubtless this is for us all one very practical use of our Easter faith, as a renewal of courage in the face (if it be so) of discouraging experience :—“that we surely trusting in Thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Shall we go one step further, and suppose that even in this faith too we may seem to ourselves to fail : that here too we are more and more hedged in and depressed : that this insight too and this confidence seems ebbing from us : that once more the stick is growing more parched and the bones more dry ; till in our helplessness proved again and again, there is nothing before us but despair of

¹ Ezek. xxxvii. 11-14.

² S. Luke xv. 23, 24.

ourselves? Yet even if it be as a mere act of dying faith we would remember still that despair of ourselves is not to be despair of God: still it shall be the Power of Resurrection, the Divine death-shattering power, whereon, however much we are dying, our faith shall rest. The power which manifested itself once in the riven tomb, the power which works resurrection in the dying soul—on this power we still will set our thought and desire, still look to it, wait for it, hope towards it. It still shall be, when nothing else is, our one thread of life.

Nay, and if all powers seem dying: is even death hopeless? If it be death, is death, as death the end? Is death the denial or impossibility of Resurrection?

Rather, if eyes and heart, if hope and desire, be but still towards God—towards the goodness and beauty which yet seem (if it be so) more and more impossible to us: we shall say to ourselves but truth if we remind ourselves that a veritable Resurrection is the core of the Christian creed: Resurrection made sure by the resurrection of Christ; Resurrection by Divine, inconceivable, power; Resurrection, through, and after, and out of, *death*.

XIV

JOHN BAPTIST

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.”—S. MATT. xi. 11.

It is a mighty figure that looms before us, as often as our minds are recalled to the history of John the Baptist. In his solitude, in his self-mastery, just because self-mastery and solitude seem to us so inseparable a part of what he is, we almost forget to measure him by the standard of common human frailty at all. We almost forget the grandeur of his moral greatness, just because the greatness in him is so complete. Doubts, misgivings, temptations, failures,—except in the case of one recorded doubt, which when recorded, seems to us so strange that we are hardly sure whether we even interpret its meaning rightly,—these things, if they were in him, at least are no direct part of the image of him, the Forerunner, as it looms for us across the intervening centuries of the Christian Church. We think of him in the ruggedness of his personal presence and life. We hear from him the accents of the

austerest of preachers: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."¹ We are awed by him as the searching awakener of conscience—while multitudes of all sorts stream forth to his preaching: and the answer to his preaching comes back from the hearts of those who hear him: asking, out of their different conditions, the one anxious query, "What shall we do then?" "Master, what shall we do?" "And what shall *we* do?" Or we tremble for him as the fearless reprover of sin, when he speaks in tones of uncompromising rebuke to a king, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." And yet all such things as these by themselves, might be paralleled, more or less, or explained. They might be exaggerated; or they might be accounted for; or our inferences from them might be uncertain or mistaken. It is not till we come to the judgement summarized in our Lord's own words that we know that we have not been misled;—that there is no shadow of exaggeration;—that the highest inferences we could have dared to draw are still within the mark. "What went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet!"

"More than a prophet." Glance back for one moment, and compass, if you can, in imagination what this estimate means! Think of God's own

¹ Luke iii. 7, 8.

words about Moses, about David, about Noah, Daniel, and Job. Think of the meaning and the potency of the names of an Elijah or an Isaiah. And yet all these, and such as these, are swept aside together in this one phrase. Something there seems to be about him which, in its very scope and compass, goes beyond all this: something—as it were generically—“more than a prophet.” And so, even while the mind is still resting upon a judgement such as this, given, as it is, upon the word of Christ; there follows this yet more deliberate and emphatic expression,—the climax, as it seems, of what words could assert,—“Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist!”

So long as we are thinking of John himself, and trying to recall and measure what he was, we may well perhaps be staggered before a judgement such as this, which puts him, upon the positive assurance of the truth of God, upon such a pinnacle of eminence above the eminent of the human race.

Then suddenly in a moment, the whole proportion and surrounding is changed! and we, instead of being startled at the individual grandeur of John the Baptist,—are awed at the tremendous estimate of the meaning and dignity of life in the Christian Church, from the lips of Jesus Christ. “Notwithstanding, he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.” All

this concentrated attention upon the greatness of the Baptist, with its mighty climax, is but a prelude—and the prelude is but a foil—to the transcendent splendour of the Christian life.

What does it mean? or what relation has it with any experience of ours? This immediate relation, perhaps, it has with our experience: that it is infinitely humbling to us. We, with a life within us which so transcends the climax of what humanity, out of Christ, could be: to fall often so far below—I will not say the standard of prophetic, but so often even the attainments of pagan philosophical, excellence! Our humiliation is the contrast between ourselves and ourselves: between the selves we have realized; and the selves as, in conscious relation with the Person of Christ, they are, by right, and are capable of becoming, in Him. The climax of non-Christian humanity pales before the splendour of the supernatural life which, in Christ, informs and transfuses the natural. For life in the Church of Christ is a supernatural thing: it is not the fortifying, nor the interpreting, but the transcending, of the natural.

This is the sort of truth to which our Lord, in the words of this great paradox, gives so startling an emphasis. The feeling of natural awe at the grandeur of John the Baptist, as often as the figure of the Baptist is brought back to our memory, passes on into the awe, which is more than natural, of the character and meaning of the Church of Jesus Christ.

For the Baptist, after all, is primarily this—the Forerunner—“the voice of one crying in the wilderness ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord.’” And the Church is—the Lord;—is Jesus Christ;—not indeed in material wise, but in and through His Spirit. Need we add that it is not therefore the less Christ, but the more. Because it is truly His Spirit, therefore it is a true presentment and utterance of His very self indeed.

The Church is the Spirit: and the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. It is the realization of Jesus Christ Himself,—not in part, not in symbol, not by nearness of external relation or privilege, but thoroughly, inwardly, really;—because it is His Spirit. It is His Spirit because it is Himself. It is Himself because its union with Him is in Spirit,—and therefore in truth. “Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended.”¹ The touching of the body merely was but outward and symbolic. The real touch could be only through the Spirit: not a touch of the body, by the body, and so, through the body, of the Spirit; but a touch (and far more than a touch) of the Spirit, in the spirit, and so through the spirit, of the body also, which is now but expression of perfect spirit.

The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. If we let go, or hold loosely to, the doctrine which, for us, the *Filioque* represents, we shall lose our grasp of the essence of the Church’s life. “Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of

¹ John xx. 17,

His Son in your hearts, crying Abba Father.¹” The Spirit of the Father, too, no doubt, because the Spirit of the Father and of the Son is one Spirit; but in us even more characteristically, more primarily, “the Spirit of the Son, crying Abba Father.”

Yes, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son is One Spirit of Love, and where that Spirit is—of the love of the Father to the Son, of the Son to the Father,—there, with and in the Spirit, are the Father and the Son. Yet in us the Spirit of the Father because the Spirit of the Son, rather than, conversely, the Spirit of the Son because the Spirit of the Father. “I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”² “When they were come over against Mysia they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.”³

Before the Incarnation God was known only outside of human nature. Jesus Christ, Incarnate, was, in human life, and in human character, the revelation of God. “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father.”⁴ But even the revelation of Jesus Christ Incarnate was a revelation of God — within *Humanity* indeed directly, but only very indirectly within *men*. Even to those who, under earthly

¹ Gal. iv, 6,² Phil. i, 19,

Acts xvi, 7.

⁴ John xiv, 9,

conditions, knew and loved Him best, it was an imperfect, nay even, by comparison, an unreal, knowing; a knowing which, judged by the true knowing, was ignorance; a love which, compared with love's true possibilities, was rather a feeling after, than a finding, of love. If S. Paul gives direct expression to this thought, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more;"¹ the inferences which follow in the same direction from the realized experience of the beloved S. John are surely neither less striking nor less instructive. Compare the thought with which his epistle bursts into utterance: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ,"² with the practical test of the Christian character, "Hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He gave us."³ Take this with the further description of the manifestation of His Spirit in human character, "every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God,"⁴—"God is love: and he that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God abideth in him,"⁵—"If we love one another, God abideth in us, and His love is perfected in us: hereby know we that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."⁶

¹ 2 Cor. v. 16.
² 1 John iv. 2.

³ 1 John i. 3.
⁵ 1 John iv. 16.

⁴ 1 John iii. 24.
⁶ 1 John iv. 13.

What is the Church? the consciousness of the Church? the life of the Church? the power of the Church? the *differentia* of the Church? The answer to these questions is but one. It is the Spirit of Jesus, which is the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit of God, mediated, as the Spirit of Humanity, through the Son of God, who is Man.

These are great things: and how short a way towards them a few words carry us! For many of us, it may be, have much, very much, to learn, of the meaning of the doctrine of the presence of the Spirit.

I cannot attempt even to begin to explore this doctrine, which is the *essentia* of the Church of Jesus Christ. I can but indicate, as we come to the threshold, once more, of S. John Baptist's day, in what direction lie the unmeasured treasures of that all-inclusive doctrine and life, which our Lord has for us so strikingly connected with the unparalleled grandeur, and still more with the sharp and peremptory limitations, of the person of John the Baptist.

XV

LAW AND GOSPEL

“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.”—1 JOHN iii. 7.

THESE are words of the gravest moral severity. They hold up a relentless ideal. They enforce a terrible command. They do not contain any encouragement. They are not any offer of power. So far as there is anything in them that can be called news; it is certainly not news of joy.

Are they then inappropriate as the text of a Christian sermon? It used to be the fashion—perhaps it is so still,—to draw a sharp distinction between two spheres of thought, between two systems of teaching. The one spoke gravely, the other caressed and encouraged: the one held up the finger of warning, the other clasped hands in assurance of aid: the one dealt in words of command, the other in promises: the one was summed up as law, the other as gospel.

Now up to a certain point the distinction is both true, and of very high practical value. It is not indeed a final or absolute distinction. They do ultimately melt and fuse, as aspects or elements

of one whole. But they certainly are not identical; and it is well not to confuse the one of them with the other.

Does, then, the Christian preacher preach law or preach Gospel? The answer is that, however broadly he may distinguish them, he must needs preach both. Nor will any man preach either with any effect, who does not preach the other also. Granted that it is his characteristic work to preach the Gospel. But the Gospel includes the law: and only upon the basis of the assumption of the necessity, and of the beauty, of law, does the Gospel stand out, with real content of meaning, as Gospel.

For what is law? It is all religion, regarded as religion, that is regarded as an imperative ideal,—as duty. Anything whatever which says, in whatever form, or with whatever detail,—“you must do this”—“you must not do that”; “you must abstain from evil”—“you must learn to do, and be, good”;—is so far religion, in the form of duty. It is law. Whatever heightens or deepens the ideal vision—the glory and the beauty—of goodness, does but add fresh emphasis of difficulty to the meaning of being good. It still holds up goodness as an ideal, and duty. It is duty still; but by its very insight into truth, by its very splendour of conception, it has made duty infinitely higher, and harder than before. It is law still, only it is law in a form more hopelessly difficult than ever. It has the fatal characteristic of law. It

convicts and condemns. The higher its ideal beauty, the more I fall short of it. And the more I fall short of it,—that is, the more perfectly spiritual it is in itself,—the more fatally is it to me the occasion of death. In proportion as it is beautiful, in proportion as it is Divine,—does it crush and slay me. “I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment which was unto life, this I found to be unto death: for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me.”¹ It is not its own fault. It is the fault of the sin in me. But the *effect* of the sin in me is that, the more “holy and righteous and good” the religious commandment and ideal is, so much the more is it the occasion of death to me.

All precepts which come in the form of command, such as these,—“Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”² “Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance.”³ “Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time Thou shalt not kill . . . but I say unto you that every one who is angry with his brother . . .”⁴ “Ye have heard that it was said Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you Love your enemies. . . .”⁵ “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”⁶

¹ Rom. vii. 9-11.² Matt. iii. 1; iv. 17, etc.³ Matt. iii. 8.⁴ Matt. v. 21, 22.⁵ Matt. v. 43.⁶ Matt. v. 48.

“Thou when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and . . .”¹ “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”² . . . “Thou when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face . . .”³ “Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven⁴ . . . no man can serve two masters . . .”⁵ “Enter ye in by the narrow gate⁶ . . . the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit⁷ . . . not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;”⁸—all these are law, not Gospel: that is to say, they are goodness put to the conscience as an imperative ideal: goodness revealed indeed with unsuspected depth as goodness: but goodness still as a command,—the *duty* of goodness. And the deeper the insight into the meaning of goodness, so much is it at once the more inexorable as command, and also the more impossible, the more crushing, as duty.

All these are law. Are they then superseded in the Christian Church? On the contrary, they are the very material of the Sermon on the Mount, they are the very staple of the preaching of Jesus Christ Himself. And so, when, to take a single instance almost at random, Paul, as he stood before Felix, “reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and judgement to come,” he too was pressing upon the conscience of his hearers the essentially imperative character, the moral

¹ Matt. vi. 6.⁴ Matt. vi. 20.⁷ Matt. vii. 17.² Matt. vi. 15.⁵ Matt. vi. 24.⁸ Matt. vii. 21.³ Matt. vi. 17.⁶ Matt. vii. 13.

demand which is an inherent necessity, of any true appreciation of what goodness means and is. But it is as duty that it is urged. And it is as duty that it is felt to be staggering. You *must* overcome evil! You *must* learn to be good! All these are law. Nay, the very urging of the practices which are themselves most properly spiritual, attendance at services, effort in prayer, the dutiful use of sacraments—even these also are law, so long as they are pressed as imperious duties: as acts of obligation upon the Christian conscience. But if all these are law, what is Gospel?

What is Gospel? To answer fully would be to expound the whole doctrine of Atonement, and therewith (since without them atonement is unintelligible) the doctrines—and not the doctrines only but the experience—of the Incarnation and of the Holy Spirit. But briefly it is all that makes up the new revelation to the conscience, in the Life and Death of Jesus Christ, of new and undreamed-of personal possibilities and hopes. All the work of Christ, all the possibilities of the Spirit, all the new burst of hope, all the new sense of life, all the radiancy of soul-transforming faith, are parts of the sublime message of good news.

A message of good news is one thing; a revelation of duty, more imperious and impossible than before, is another. Is then Christian preaching the joyous message only—and not the deepened insight into goodness—as goodness, and therefore

as duty? No, the deepened insight into goodness, with its ever more imperious claim upon the life, clearly though it comes under the conception of law,—is itself an integral part of the Gospel message. The Gospel is at once a dazzling revelation of goodness: and a realization of its possibility in Christ. It is a realization of new possibility. But possibility of what?—possibility of that very excellency of moral goodness, which is part of the revelation of the Gospel itself. The very goodness which, if revealed only as a command or ideal, would most crushingly discourage: while it *is* revealed both as ideal and as command, is revealed after all even more as a possibility of the transfigured life. And herein lies the very pith of the Evangel. The goodness which is so transforming is not the revealed possibility of any lesser standard, but of the very Beauty of Holiness itself. The insight into the meaning of holiness is *deepened*—holiness at once as ideally beautiful and as inherently necessary: the standard, as standard, is *raised*: the command, as command, is accentuated, by the very brightness of the revelation itself, which is also most distinctively a revelation of new possibilities in Christ. So law is heightened, to the most extreme point of its claims and commands as law, at the very moment at which it is also merged, in Gospel.

We do not then need to demur to the preaching of law, as if it were an alternative to Gospel or Christian preaching. On the contrary, it will be re-

cognized what a very large part of the duty of the Christian preacher it is to speak to the conscience in the way of command, to preach law, a Christian law, which is higher, and therefore more impossible, diviner in spiritual perfectness, and therefore more inexorably condemning and killing, than the law of Sinai! "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."¹ We largely preach Christian law. Only, when we are preaching Christian law, as such, we do not exactly call it Christian Gospel. Christian truth *is* law,—not less, but even more than was the Decalogue. Only, it is not law merely. It is not law, simply as such. It is law in a new setting. It is law with a new background. It is law with a new secret of hope and power. Yet the law is law still; and the very new secret of hope and power is itself to make possible a life, which, whatever else may be the description of it, is a life according to law.

If there is a sense in which the Christian's hope is based upon the very reality of his own helplessness: that which has for its basis his own helplessness is a hope of life in the Spirit, whose consummation will be the highest correspondence with the highest perfectness of what law means. Such a basis, and such a significance in the hope that is based upon it, meet together

¹ Matt. v. 20.

in the words of our special Eucharistic supplication throughout this present week; "Grant to us, Lord, we beseech Thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord."¹

¹ Collect for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

XVI

THOU SHALT NOT

“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”
—GEN. xxxix. 9.

THESE words were part of one of the second lessons appointed for last Sunday evening. They contain the answer which God’s grace enabled Joseph to make, in the very moment of most pressing temptation. They are the words of goodness. They are the words of victory. Joseph remembered himself as before God, and as before God he judged and guarded his acts.

I am not going to dwell more upon Joseph’s temptation. But I ask you, first of all, to notice that these words are, in fact, the victorious answer of one who, by God’s grace, triumphed over his temptation, and was therefore the stronger and the purer by means of it; and secondly, to notice, in them, something at all events about the nature of an effective and a victorious religion. Observe, it is not a question now of religious profession, or feeling, but of the religion which is really victorious over life.

“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Clearly the point of the victory

was that he had strength to say "*No*"—no to the tempter, no to himself. The victory lies in what he did *not* do, in what he would not even think of doing. It is strong discipline of will; it is refusal; it is real power of self-constraint. This then is, so far, what the goodness looks like. And you, if ever, or wherever, you have seen or known man or woman in whom the spirit of holiness dwelt, you have seen it doubtless and recognized it in this form. The *really* religious life is one which would *not* do this, and would *not* do that: which had real power over self to abstain and refuse: to abstain from vice, to refuse sloth; to hold the tongue back, in sharp discipline, from the angry answer or the foolish tale; in a word, it is strong and faithful—*not* to think, *not* to say, *not* to do, things which are natural, and more than easy, but which do not belong to the holiness, or the love, of God.

Is *this*, then, the real meaning of Christian holiness? is this the life of religion? a lot of nots? not this, and not that, and not the other? Because this would seem, and seem justly, to be, if this were all, a very poor description of life. But is it a sufficient account of the life of religion? No indeed—it is only the outside look of things—as seen from the point of view of frailty, and sin. Consider what we mean by the freshness and the joy of bodily health? What is real health of body? If indeed you should introduce a man who was the model of physical health into the wards of a hospital,—the meaning of his health might seem by contrast to be, that he did

not stumble, did *not* faint, had *not* a broken leg, did *not* fall into fits. Is the meaning of health then only a number of *nots*? True, from the point of view of invalids or cripples, it may seem to consist of these. And no doubt every one of these *nots* is true in fact. But how much more is health than *not* tumbling, or *not* fainting, or *not* walking on crutches? Nay, how different really, even in kind, from these *nots*? Health is no mere negative, but a strong, positive, joyous, inner reality; it is the joyous sense of what seems almost like an infinite power (and gladness through power) in every fibre and capacity of the bodily life. And *not* bodily only: for the bodily life is instinctively felt to pass on, in its capacity and real meaning, into mental and spiritual possibilities beyond.

As then, health is infinitely more than *not* walking on a crutch: and yet to a cripple, the thought of *not* walking on a crutch is perhaps the very form in which he dreams of health: so,—though the goodness of God is infinitely more than, and different from, the negativeness of *not* doing what is wrong,—yet to us, cripples as we naturally are for the spiritual life, the sore discipline of abstaining from what we know to be wrong, may well be the first aspect in which the meaning of goodness becomes intelligible.

For indeed we have, in point of fact, a diseased and bad self to be disciplined in the name, and by the power, of faith. We *are* in confusion with ourselves, and *do* do the things which we know to

belong to death. Consider how truly, and how strangely, this is so. The sun does not swerve from its appointed path; nor the moon from her orbit. Even animals, though more like man, do not run after what they know to be poison, or try to transgress the laws of their being and happiness. But man does. He follows the very things which he knows to be deadly to himself. The drunkard may know the curse and the tyranny of the drink,—none better than he. Oftentimes he shudders at and loathes it. Yet he takes the drink again, none compelling, because he *will* have it.

So another gives way to temper, day after day, even whilst he knows,—none so well,—that his temper is a scourge,—a scourge under the misery of which, he is even now smarting: a scourge which has driven all love and joy out of his home. He sees in secret, and owns, his utter wretchedness; yet he never grapples with his tyrant in the name of God: but nurses his temper and sullenness every day anew. So it is with envy, so with pride, so with selfishness, so with consuming vanity or indolence. He, who falls by them, still perhaps detests them; he despises them, and himself because of them:—yet he chooses them every time. There is no instance, it may be, in his history, of a resolute religious discipline and denial of self. Oftentimes we see that what we are doing is deadly, deadly to health or happiness of mind or body: yet we do it, and choose to do it, still. This is indeed the too *natural* condition of things with us all.

Just consider how different in all these ways, a perfect man would be. In thinking of the difference between the perfect and the natural man, we at once begin again with our notes. The perfect man does not idle, does not drink, does not lose his temper or his patience, does not speak sharp words, nay, does not even think sharp thoughts, does not choose, does not desire what is wrong. Whatever else the inner meaning of goodness may be; so far as regards the various weaknesses, follies, temptations, sins of human life, it does not do this, and it does not think that. Nay, if it were really perfection, it would not only not do, but it would not desire to do. So far from desiring, it would utterly hate and detest. It would *so* hate and detest the things which it knows to be hateful, that (if it were perfect indeed) it not only *would* not, but it *could* not, choose or do them. Thus it is that S. John speaks in one place of the *perfect* condition, the state of the men who with full and final completeness have become—that which even we all are, by right and in germ, in our baptism; that which our baptism *really* means for us all;—the very children of God. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”¹ As on the other hand S. Paul describes to us our *natural* condition, “What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. . . . The good that I would, I do not; but the

¹ 1 John iii. 9.

evil which I would not, that I do. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"¹

But if these be the *natural* and the *perfect* conditions, what is the condition of the religious man: the man, or woman, who in Christ's Church, through faith, is striving to live and learn the life of Communion with Christ? Is the religious man, or is he bound to be, just like S. John's picture of the perfect man? No, not so. Such perfection as this is not reached by sinful man on earth. That S. John's picture was not realized on earth, not even by S. John himself, he himself clearly shows us in other passages, as when he says, almost fiercely, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us . . . if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."²

On the other hand, that S. Paul, when describing the natural man, is not simply describing himself, his very next chapter to the Romans makes no less plain. What then is the condition of the religious man?

Is the man amongst ourselves, who is in religious earnest, *neither* like the natural man described by S. Paul, *nor* like the perfect man of whom S. John speaks? On the contrary, so far from being like neither, he is like both. Inconsistent as they are with each other, yet both are strangely combined together in him. The words of S. Paul, "The good

¹ Romans vii. 15, 19, 24.

² 1 John i. 8-10.

that I would I do not ; but the evil which I would not that I do——” Oh ! how well he knows them ! For alas ! the natural man is in him still. Indeed, he knows them better than the worldly sinner knows them. For at least they are the words of one who is struggling, or longing, after good : and the wilful sinner has hardly begun to struggle. This cry, then, though it be the cry which represents the natural man, represents him after all not as merely natural, but as seeking, at least, after God. It is deeply wrought in to the consciousness of those who, though they have sinned, are trying to be religious, and who just because they are religious, know how much they have sinned.

On the other hand, though what S. John says seems so far above them : yet there is something already, even in their own consciousness, which makes even *them* feel and know, in themselves, that what S. John says is true. They have at least just tasted, for a moment, the freedom and the strength which belong to goodness. They have had at least a glimpse (though they cannot keep it), enough to make them surely know on which side joy and freedom really lie. And from the glimpse which even they have seen, from the taste which even they, for a moment, have shared, they know, not by hearing with the ears, but by the very certainty of their own hearts, that goodness, in proportion as it grew more and more perfect, would be less and less willing—aye at last even less and less able—to choose and do the miseries of sin.

The religious man knows this, although he is as yet, perhaps, far from being perfected. Though, in a sense most living and most real, he was, by the grace of Baptism, regenerate: yet the unregenerate nature lives in him still. For the present he is two things: a natural man still, as well as religious and living within the reality of regenerating grace. Alas! the unregenerate will *may* crush the regenerate. But if by God's grace he goes on in the way of religion, more and more the regenerate nature will curb and constrain and possess the natural impulses. Only, on this side the grave, it may be, the unregenerate consciousness will not wholly cease; nor the avenues wholly be closed of that bodily life through which temptation still has some way, and right, of access to the soul. For the religious man, in his time of trial, is one who, having been reborn, is by God's grace growing, however slowly, the growth of holiness: one who is not, and yet in Christ is being, perfected.

Now if these things be true, it is easy to see why it is that, for us, in our confusion and imperfectness, the way of goodness and truth, is at first, is for the present, a way of discipline, and a way of constraint. As, to the drunkard, the way of health and freedom means at first a desperate struggle *not* to do the very things which he most desires; so with each one of us, whatever our special temptations or frailties may be, the way of goodness for the present means, in one form or other, the discipline of not following, but restrain-

ing and correcting, our wills. Holiness is not really constraint: just as temperance is really freedom not slavery. But to those who love drink, the way of freedom looks for the moment like slavery. And so to us who, by pleasing ourselves, have, in whatever way, made our own characters weak, our apprenticeship to holiness, is, for the present, discipline. But again as the man once a drunkard, who submitted to the discipline of self-constraint and self-denial, found that it led not to slavery, but to freedom, health, joy: so if we be but faithful, and brave, and true, to accept, and not refuse—to practise and not to mock at—the simple ways of stringency and sharp self-conquest which apply to ourselves, we shall find, no less, that goodness which begins with “*Thou shalt not*” ends in perfect freedom: that the stringent conscience, here and now, of the restraining and rebuking presence of God, will become more and more, even now, and hereafter with perfectness more than we can conceive, the bliss of everlasting and infinite Holiness.

XVII

DESIRE OF SOUL

“My soul hath a desire.”—PSALM lxxxiv. 2.

WE all intend to be on the side of good. And there are traditions and associations round us, and there are conventional expectations respecting us, which identify us, more or less expressly, with good sympathies, which bind us to support, in some sense or manner, whatever is understood to belong to the cause of good. Such expectations from us on the part of the world, such conventional identification of our sympathies with holiness, have their own value, which I do not discuss now. But may I ask you to begin by considering one effect which may follow—an effect surely not unintelligible to us—from the fact that we are, so far, traditionally identified with holiness. Can you imagine, then, some such case as this? A person, first of all, living in a place traditionally religious, one whose whole life may be said to wear the obvious livery of religion, one who has had some part in many religious enterprises and is the comrade and friend of the religious; yet can you imagine, under all this more than respectable exterior, such a dull inertness

within, such a feeble flicker of any personal spiritual energy or affection whatever, that it would almost seem as if the very powers of personal spiritual life were fainting and fading away, as though by and by the last breath of living individual capacity would die out and cease from the soul?

Do we understand the experience of individual lifelessness even in the midst of the things that witness to spiritual life? Can I indeed live amongst religious friends and religious habits, yet be myself individually so soulless? so that in things that belong to the great struggle for godliness, whatever I too may receive, agree with, consent to, I feel that the really strong impulse, the overmastering desire, is not in me? I applaud those in whom it is. It seems to warm me a little to get near it in them. But in me it is only as a borrowed dress, an echo, an unreality. I see that it is right, but the desire for it does not influence me. There is no motive force of strong personal longing, no movement of devouring passion within. The deep cry of the Psalmist is not for me. I could not sincerely lift my eyes and my hands to heaven and cry, as he cried, in words that yearn across the centuries, "My soul hath a desire!"

I do but glance at another alternative; yet along with that stagnancy of all higher zest and ardour which seems to verge towards the mere snuffing out of soul: there is the case also, is there not? in which for want of a more dominating interest, the bodily desires of comfort day by day, selfishness,

luxury, sloth, do guide the life and sway the mind. Alas! what a fearful substitute for the Psalmist's cry would this be, "my body hath its desires." On the other hand, it is often like the first wakening up into reality of life when first any one of us can really say—or rather can no longer refrain from saying—"my soul hath a desire!"

But it is not every desire of soul which is life. "My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God." The desire is towards good;—not a cold neutral acknowledgement that good is desirable, but desire that is felt as a passion, controlling life, animating zeal, towards all that is felt to belong to that Presence of the Lord, that nature of the living God. The desire towards good will find its first strain and testing within the personal life. Devotion to goodness—*that* is devotion to God. No one is devoted to God, who is not devoted to goodness—goodness in himself. The passion must manifest itself here, if it is real.

And observe that such desire towards good has, as its necessary obverse, a burning indignation against what is evil. It is not tolerant of evil: not patient towards sin: it cannot sit merely still, it cannot smile and bear what it knows to be abhorrent to good. So it was certainly with the Apostles, so it was with Jesus Christ Himself. Moral indignation, burning—on occasion terrible—is a necessary quality, or aspect, of the desire of love. Remember how this one fact of lack of anger

—the sin of tolerance—becomes the condemnation of those who are cooling from love. “He hath left off to behave himself wisely and to do good, he imagineth mischief upon his bed, and hath set himself in no good way : *neither doth he abhor anything that is evil.*”¹ Conversely, there is this of praise for the Church of Ephesus, “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.”²

I am not speaking now of the way to help those who have sinned towards recovery ; that is another matter ; but of the necessary attitude, towards what is known as evil, of those whose hearts have in them the desire of love. “My soul breaketh out for the very fervent desire ; that it hath alway unto Thy judgements.”³

And indeed all this desire after good and abhorrence of what is evil (however much it may on occasion manifest itself as towards other men, and the good or the evil which they represent) must, as I said, have its place and stress mainly within the discipline of the personal life. It is here that devotion to goodness is the direct expression of devotion to God ; or that the failure of the one belies the profession of the other. Devotion to goodness is indeed not the same thing as achievement of goodness, any more than devotion to study is all knowledge. The devotion is rather in the reality of that desire and abhorrence, which dominate and which characterize motive, action, and thought.

¹ Psalm xxxvi. 3, 4.

² Rev. ii. 6.

³ Psalm cxix. 20.

This fervent desire towards good and the joy of it; I have spoken of it hitherto rather in terms borrowed from the Psalms. Let me remind you, before passing away, of three great principles about it which stand clearly out in the Epistle of S. John. The first is that it is manifested in the world as Love. So it was in the fact of the Atonement; so it is in all those who share at all the Spirit of God. "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."¹ If any one asks how such love can be consistent with the anger of which we spoke, I can only stay now to ask in return, how was the stern indignation of Jesus Christ consistent with the character of the Lamb of God? The second principle from S. John is that the whole revelation of this to men, and in men, is a corollary from, and altogether dependent upon, the fact of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us."² And the third principle is that, whereas there are in the world rival spiritual principles, the outward test of the reception of the *true* spirit of life is the open-hearted acceptance, the loyal joyous dogmatic confession, of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ as the great fact in the world. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God;

¹ 1 John iv. 8.² 1 John iv. 9, 10.

and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of Anti-Christ.”¹

Joy, transforming the whole life in the conscious acceptance and knowledge of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, this is S. John’s secret, this is that satisfied desire of his soul which makes it impossible for him to be still. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; and these things we write that your (that our) joy may be fulfilled.”²

I said that burning desire and fervent indignation, the impatience which cannot bear that things should be so hungry or so wrong; these correspond together, they are but two forms of one. Cool down the desire of love, and moral indignation has no meaning, has no place. If it is affected still, it is unreal. Apart from the zeal of love, it is either hypocritical or dead. Cool down the desire of burning love, such love as forced S. John to speak and to impart his joy—“that ye also may have fellowship with us”—and universal tolerance succeeds. We are so coolly patient, then, of moral failure at home—of ignorance, darkness, cruelty abroad. We feel that it is all a pity, of course; and we are on the side of good, and of education; but . . . we have learnt to be very tolerant.

How have we learnt to be tolerant? or, what does this tolerance mean? Are we to say of it, in

¹ 1 John iv, 2, 3.

² 1 John i, 3, 4.

the words of the Psalmist, "neither doth he abhor anything that is evil?" Nay, but we say, perhaps, in self-defence, that, at least, is not fair. The question rather is how far it *is* certainly evil—how far we are sure that we *have* such exclusive monopoly of truth.

Truly our tolerance goes even further than we thought! We are not quite sure after all how far the evil is wholly evil, or the good exclusively good; how far truth is exactly true, or love altogether different from neutrality. Not quite sure whether the Incarnation is the one fact in the world; not quite sure perhaps whether it *is* exactly a fact; and almost sure that life in conscious allegiance to the Incarnation, and in its power through the Church and the Sacraments, is *not* the single revelation of life and joy. Aye, wonderfully tolerant we can be sometimes, unprejudiced by a single living conviction, untinged by one spark of the fire of living love. Yes, evaporate desire and indignation, desire towards the goodness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, impatience of the things which bar the growth of His kingdom amongst men; and it follows that, whatever we may still be willing to do for the claims of a conventional respectability, all the force of missionary enthusiasm is dead. Nay, the missionary enterprise itself has to stand on the defensive. And how many drawing-rooms are there through the length and breadth of the land in which the missionary cause (if it intrudes at all) has to stand upon the defensive, with the scornful

assumption perhaps that no *reasonable* defence can be really forthcoming!

Is it worth while to make this gigantic effort for so feeble a result? Is the Christianity worth anything when you get it? Do you ever practically get a really strong Christian character? Even if it were not so poor a thing, it would still be our duty to concentrate all our work at home. With such vice rampant here, it is, at least, absurd to send men and money abroad. Nay, your enterprise is not only Quixotic and dubious, but immoral; you are trying to force a form of religion which will never really suit them upon races of a totally different kind from our own; and for the sake of this you are actually trying to root up the religions which really do belong to them, and which (however possibly inferior) do represent their aspect of truth in the way which is nationally suitable. You are only, after all, immorally destructive.

I know that arguments such as these can but make the blood boil in those who know the truth of missionary work; who know what Christian faith and life really mean. Yet English society is full of them. Alas! what we have to deal with on every side is Christianity unrealized, and misinterpreted. Imagine S. John, "the Son of Thunder," in his burning zeal, assailed with such impotent arguments as these. Truly, if I could persuade one person to whom such words have ever sounded plausible, to realize how they contradict the whole faith of Christ, how flatly they deny that the Church is

Catholic, or the Incarnation a reality ; or if I could convince but one of those who has gone on in listless lack of real faith and personal desire in the midst of the surroundings and habits of religion, how much it is he who himself has missed and misrepresented the meaning of Christian faith and life, and so preached a false gospel in the face of daily society, as to have made only too natural the misbelief and unbelief which are, as it were, as an atmosphere all round about our pathway, I should not have spoken of the meaning of "Desire of soul" in vain.

The things which belong to missionary faith and interest ; the things which we are reminded, and justly reminded, that it is our universal duty to do ; the trouble involved in inquiring, reading, knowing about missionary work ; the sympathy and the courage required to help on wisely those who are touched themselves with missionary love ; to let them go, and help them to go, in the love of Christ, whatever the cost be to ourselves ; the constant, genuine, unformal prayer before God for the real spreading of His kingdom in the hearts of men, both at home and abroad ; yes, and even that which is the cheapest, and easiest, and meanest, by far, of all forms of missionary sympathy, the moderate subscription from time to time of money ; all these things,—even the least of them and in its least form,—what a burthen they necessarily seem to us when the soul is fired with no pent-up desire ; when there is no motive for doing them but a cold sense of duty,

—with, perhaps, a lurking doubt whether, after all, conventional thought is right in thinking that there is really a duty in them at all. Only, if the desire and longing of the soul be towards the courts of the Lord; if the Incarnation be to us, as to S. John, the one fact of the world, and the conscious surrender of life to the faith of the Incarnation, and communion with it, be the revelation of righteousness and love, and joy; if the heart and the flesh so rejoice in the living God; what sacrifice is there then or burthen in any of these things? The subscription a yearly burthen? To take interest in God's work among the heathen a sacrifice? These things would become then themselves part of the character, part of the desire; the necessity of love; the relief of desire; the beginning, the foretaste of the satisfaction of the heart of God.

And there have been and are those (have there not?) even among us, to whom no sacrifice of going or helping to go, of spending or sympathy, or prayer, seems any longer like a sacrifice; so completely has it become the expression of themselves; the outlet of their souls' desire; the method, to them, and the dawning, of the fulness of joy!

Yes, this desire has the promise of its fulness within itself. Other lives may be disappointing, but there is no disappointment here. Be the apparent conditions or disabilities what they may, here, at least, is the secret of effectual joy. And if there be lives which, as the years roll on, have begun to feel more or less of the disappointment,

of the leanness and hungriness, which belongs to all other experience, here is our prescription, our desire, our prayer, for *them*—for them and for ourselves in whatsoever degree :—would that the Spirit of God, melting with one warm ray of the enthusiasm of real love, all the mists and films which now cloud round our thoughts in the varying forms of despondency, dulness, weariness, burthen, doubt, would kindle such a flame of personal desire within the souls of us all !

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness ; for they shall be filled.”

XVIII

PRAYER 1

“Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire (all things whatsoever ye pray and ask for), when ye pray, believe that ye receive (have received) them, and ye shall have them.”—S. MARK xi. 24.

‘Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.’—S. JAMES iv. 3.

THE promises to prayer, as for instance in the 23rd and 24th verses of this eleventh chapter of S. Mark, are so wonderful, that we are almost compelled to fall back before them, and ask ourselves whether we can have heard, or can have understood, aright. At the first sound, they surround our imaginations, as with an air of fairyland; they seem to be something out of relation with the severities of the things that are: something out of relation with the necessary stringencies of a moral life. Then, if we feel that there is in our first sense something wrong, and begin to limit, to qualify, to explain, behold! oftentimes it is not merely any childish misunderstanding of the promise, it is the promise itself which is slipping away from us; the solemn declaration of Christ begins to mean—nothing very definite or distinguishable: or, worse still, men find ground for pleasant mockery at the hollowness of a religious aspiration so transparently

unreal. Do the words mean what they say, or do they not? or what do they mean? If I ask for health, for wealth, for what not—shall I receive it? or what mental conditions are there which would ensure my receiving it?

If some such questions from time to time are inevitable, the first instinct perhaps of a reverent mind in the face of them will be to feel how wholly mental ingenuity, or mental trifling, are in this matter out of place. We are listening to God; and trying to understand what God means. It is no question of bandying arguments about words; but of learning what He means and is, with whom we have to deal. To caricature is irreverent. To explain away is disloyal and untrue. To understand, as far as we may, and to obey, is a vital necessity of practical life.

It is plain, then, if our object is not to argue but to understand, that there are distinctions to be drawn. It is plain that there is a manner in which we can *not* apply the words of S. Mark, a sense in which they would *not* be true. So much at least the rebuke of S. James says clearly, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." Christian prayer is not a thing wild, capricious, unlimited. Christian prayer, the genuine uplifting of the heart of a man to his God;—this cannot be as random or as reckless as all the random impulses of the mind of a man. It has limits; it has conditions; it has laws. There are things which may be asked in

prayer, and there are things which may not. There are ways of asking aright, and there are ways of asking amiss. The mind that is really prayerful is a mind trained and disciplined. And we too, if we would grasp the secret and blessing of prayer, we must learn what it is to conform ourselves to its conditions ; we must rightly learn its spirit, its method, its rules ; we must pray, in one word, not amiss but aright.

If prayer has not been, in our experience, comfort or power : not comfort or power at all events in any proportion to the thrilling assurances of our Master, or the recorded experiences of those in whom His Spirit was ; what is, before God, the true account of the failure ? Is it indeed that the dreams of sanguine inexperience have faded into the light of common day ? Did we exaggerate them ? and therefore must we now draw in, and readjust our belief to a theory of things more stubborn, less aspiring ? “ Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? . . . and I said it is mine own infirmity.”¹ Yes, it is I who have misunderstood and misused. It is I who, for the prayer of God, have substituted something else, which was not according to the true nature of prayer. For prayer is one of those things, is it not ? which, though it sounds wholly simple, is only learned through discipline, often not easily : which every one naturally thinks that he can do, if he will, and when he will, as of course ;—but

¹ Psalm lxxvii. 9, 10.

which many, even in using it, misunderstand ; and which many in very honesty (as it were) abandon, because when they tried it they found that they could not get deeper down than a dead form of praying, and they shuddered to feel, at heart, that their form of praying was dead.

“Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.” The words of S. James are a rebuke, direct, searching. Yet remember, even here, that the purpose of the rebuke is medicinal. He speaks to those who, through discipline, are to become what now they are not, in capacity and in fact ; who may look forward, even now, to the hope of the real communion and joy of the Lord. “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners : and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep ; let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you.”¹

We are, then, so far, face to face with a contrast—the contrast between what is, and what seems to be, Christian praying, between a true and a false underlying principle of prayer. Bear with me if this morning I endeavour to speak a little further—not so much of the real, as of the unreal : or at least of one, not unknown, rationale of prayer, which presents itself sometimes to the

¹ James iv. 8-10.

mind as if it were the very thing which prayer means, and yet breaks strangely to pieces in the light of a more searching scrutiny.

Think, then, of a man, under pressure (it may be) of great anxieties, moved (it may be) by a great desire ; who kneels down and prays urgently to God for certain special gifts or special deliverances. So far well. But think a little further of the meaning of his attitude herein towards God ; and remember that I deliberately paint it—not according to its best interpretation, as it ought to be, but rather as it sometimes is, when it has not yet learnt to know itself aright. I seem then to see a man in an act of exceptional prayer. He thinks of himself as one person, with a certain mind and will, and wants of his own, of which no one (it seems) can so absolutely judge as himself. He thinks of God as another, higher than himself, and infinitely more powerful, but wholly outside of, wholly distinct from himself ; as separate, yea and immeasurably different, in every reality of mind, and will, and consciousness, as well as of power. To this Other, so unlike himself and so far more powerful, he makes his address. For what purpose does he address this Other ? He addresses Him, because he is conscious, in himself, of certain wants : he sees what is to be desired, and seeing, desires it ; but he has not the power to fulfil his desires. Therefore he addresses himself to God, to obtain from God, if he can, the fulfilment of his own desires. He

wants to win this, or to be freed from that : so, not being otherwise able to obtain what he wants, he kneels down and makes appeal to the power of God, in the hope that he may, by his praying, persuade God to be willing to grant him what he wants.

Now I do not say that even a prayer such as this has not its place among rudimentary efforts of prayer : God accepts, indeed, even the most childish efforts that are simple-hearted and true : but at least we must own, must we not ? that prayer such as this is but little conformed as yet to the true meaning and spirit of Christian praying. For just observe what such praying really comes to, if we look at it closely. Can we avoid confessing that, in naked words, it would mean, that the man has a wisdom and a will, to which he endeavours to conform the wisdom and will of God ? He is not, in this, at all putting himself to school, to learn God's wisdom or to enter into His will. But he is asking God for something that he himself wants. *What* he wants, he knows before he begins to pray. What is to be desired, he has felt in the depth of his own soul. He is not praying in order, in praying, to learn what it is that he wants, or what he does, or what he ought to, desire. *This* is clear to him : and it is *because* this is clear, that he is crying to God, trying, that is, by prayer to prevail upon God to give him what he does desire. There is in this no entering into the will of God.

There is, in this, no appeal to the wisdom of God. There is, in this, no surrender to the love of God. Rather it is the man who in himself knows and feels : and by his prayer he would move—sometimes would even instruct—God : that God may so do, as the man has desired.

He may indeed be said, in a sense, to make appeal to the love of God : but he is really appealing to love as indulgence, as a child appeals to be allowed to have its own way. And that would be an appeal as if to the love *against* the wisdom of God ; an appeal as it were to His parental indulgence to let His own will be for once overruled ; to let the human wisdom, in this one case, wield and change the Divine. But it is, in the main, an appeal neither to the wisdom nor the love, but simply to the power of God : to God as a means of power : an entreaty that in this thing which the man feels so deeply, God's power may work in accordance with the feeling of the man. The particular things that are prayed for may be as infinitely varied as are the tastes or fancies of various men : but whatever is prayed for in particular, is there not one single formula, which will, after all, sum up the truth of such praying, as it really is before God : in one detailed form or another, does it not come really to this, "O God, may *my* will be done !"

Will you say that all this is mere caricature ? Do Christian people,—do we ourselves—really know nothing of such prayer ?—prayer in which

we, who were praying, and God, to whom we prayed, seemed to stand as it were aloof, separate, different, set one over against the other : His mind and will seemingly one way,—ours another : and we were not altogether willing to trust either the tenderness of His wisdom, or the insight of His love : and therefore, because He and we were different, and because we were not wholly satisfied with His wisdom or His love : therefore we earnestly prayed : and the earnestness of our prayer was the strength of our effort to bend His mind—to make His love for us tenderer, His purpose for us more entirely desirable than it would have been, to win His will into agreement with our own ?

Just stay for a moment and ask what success in such prayer would mean. Alas ! in a prayer like this, the triumph of success would, by the very terms of the description, have to mean the overruling, the failure, of the will of God if it differed in any way from our own ; it would mean that the real will of God would *not* be done.

Is this whole thought a libel upon the praying of Christians ? Or, on the other hand, if I press a thought like this, will there be some who will turn round and say that, however plausible its sound in argument, it must certainly be wrong in truth :—if only for this, because it proves too much. It may seem that if any one could really prove such prayer to be wrong, there would be no room left for prayer. You will urge, perhaps,

that, after all, all human prayer must have, more or less, this character. You may dwell for instance upon the word of S. Paul, "in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." You will say that it is not possible to make our requests known to God in prayer, without being exposed to the charge of instructing God. You will say that prayer is to be the very breath of the Christian life: that no duty is more urgently laid on Christians than continual praying: and how, you will ask, can we possibly continue praying; what sense or what life would there be left in prayer; if we might never ask, however humbly, for a change in the will of God; if our prayer is always to end in meaning simply this, after all, that the will of God should be done?

Is this objection real? At least I would urge in reply that the Lord's prayer speaks for me: that whilst there is nothing there the least like "My will be done,"—on the other hand "Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven" is one of the most characteristic notes of that prayer. But is the objection sound at all in itself? Even though we should one day learn to make all prayer whatever a variation for ever on this one eternal theme, not of "my will" but "Thy will be done;" would this diminish, one atom, from the life or the force,—nay from the effort, the struggle, the battle, or the victory, of prayer? Rather, so long as there is in our prayer any element which stands

in conscious contrast with God's will ; so long our power in prayer, and with it, our motive for praying, has weakness at the core :—and the more we should grow in union with God's will, so much the less ground should we have for praying.

No, prayer is *not* the effort of a man to bend or win to himself the will of God. There is in it no effort, no desire, no thought, against, or apart from, God. Rather it is man's most deliberate and perpetual effort, through the power of God the Spirit in the Name of God the Son,—not against but towards—the realization of the will and life of God. Make THY will my will : and my will into Thy will ! If the voice of prayer in its moment of supreme distraction reaches its simplicity only in tones which are wrung with anguish, “nevertheless not my will but Thine be done :” remember that the perfectness of prayer, not its cessation, is realized in fruition of perfect communion. In agony, or in victory, the perfectness of praying is the praying of the Son of God.

XIX

PRAYER 2

“Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”—S. MATT. vi. 10.

THERE are times, perhaps, when it may almost seem to us as if the very thing which we meant by praying,—the one central ground and idea of prayer, were man’s effort to change and win, to himself, the will of God. Then, if this thought in us is in any wise checked or reproved, and if we feel compelled to own, on challenge, that it will not bear scrutiny as a true account of Christian prayer, it is likely enough that there may follow, in our mind, some momentary instinct at least, of doubt, whether we can give in its place an account of our praying which will be adequate to cover all the practical necessities of prayer; which will make the life of prayer as really living, and the power of prayer in human life as potent, as practical, as victorious, as we fancied that it was, or might have been, before.

If so, it is certainly time to try to see what prayer means, in the light of the picture of the praying of our Lord Jesus Christ. For of this, at least, I suppose, we are absolutely sure, that there was never a life so perfectly prayerful as

His. Was there then effort, combat, effectiveness in His praying? It was not effort, certainly, or combat, or effect, *against* the will of God. When, hour after hour, He spent the long night through in prayer with God, did He strive against God? was His prayer, even in the smallest degree, an effort to bend or alter the Divine will? Or pass on even from this. Look at once at that scene in the garden of Gethsemane; that supreme moment wherein His soul seemed dazed, as it were, and crushed, as never before, by the immensity of the load that was laid upon it. What then is the meaning of that prayer of His agony—"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass [away] from Me, nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Is even that, which at first sight may seem more like it, is it really, for one single moment, an effort to bend or change the will of God? Are we to say that the prayer of the agony was a failure? Or, was it two different prayers? first an effort, unsuccessfully made, to change God's will, and then, when that failed, an effort to be resigned in submission to the failure? Surely, it was far otherwise. Rather, the effort of His soul in that awful moment,—across all the inevitable shrinking of the flesh, across the deep horror and distraction of impulse which must form part of the undimmed consciousness of human life before the unnatural outrage of the knife of the murderer,—the real effort of His soul was one effort, single,

consistent, and triumphant altogether. It was the final surrender, and consecration, of every impulse of necessary human shrinking even from that death of inconceivable sacrifice. It meant, it was, not the defeat, indeed, or crushing, of human will, but its crowning simplicity, in perfect identification, perfect oneness, with the Divine. Was not this the real issue of that most victorious prayer,—namely that, in it, the will, even of human flesh, willed and chose for itself every unnatural detail of the agony, as voluntarily, as entirely, as did the will of God?

And if so, then we shall say of our Lord Jesus Christ, without the smallest element of hesitation or reserve, that His lifelong effort of prayer was in no sense, at no point, an effort as against God,—as if by intensity of filial entreaty, to bend, to vary, to win the will of the Father: but rather that it was, from first to last, a converse and communing with God; an entering into God's will: a growth, a learning—(whether we can understand what growth and learning were in Him, or whether we can not), a consummating, more and more, of breath and soul, of feeling and willing, into oneness with the very will of God.

Is this, then, to be our account of what prayer, in man, means? Or, if so, what would follow in practical consequence? If we say that human prayer, rightly understood, is an entering of man into God's mind, a growth, by conscious effort, in union of will with God, shall we by this, weaken

prayer? Weaken the motive to it? Break down the effective force of it? If to pray is but to enter more and more into God's all-ruling will: does this mean that, at all events, our prayer can have no effect in the outward and visible world? Does it mean that prayer is only an inward discipline? That the real effects of prayer are only to be looked for upon and within ourselves? That prayer may alter our relation to things around, but cannot alter anything in the things themselves? That it may make *us* better, holier, more submissive: but that still every thing must happen as it happened before,—that still every sorrow and pain, every accident or cruelty, every failure or outrage must fall, on ourselves and those we love, just as surely, just as terribly, as if we had not prayed?

It might seem so indeed, if we are to lay down together these two principles as both alike true: the first, that prayer is man's effort of entering more and more into union with God's will: and the second, that in all the world, God's will alone is, uniformly and always, done.

Is, then, God's will always and anyhow done in all the world?—Nothing done in this world, but the will of God? Is that the true account of this world as it stands? Is that the inner secret of human life as we know it? Human life as it is!—with all its endless catalogue of failure and sin, of intemperance and lustfulness, of negligence, cruelty, or malice,—and their terrible

entail of wasting and suffering, of disaster and death! From Eve's first tasting of the forbidden fruit, from the uplifting of the arm of Cain,—to the horrors which, from time to time, appal us amongst ourselves,—to the more nameless horrors which we do not even conceive in the dark places of the earth,—is it all, always and uniformly and only, the perfect will of the infinitely loving God? If the history of the world were the simple record of His unthwarted will; if every event in life were the direct action of His infinitely tender beneficence; how perfectly beautiful would the record of life be! and how different from the record which we know!

Surely His will is *not* uniformly done! But if not, why not? "From whence then hath it tares? and He said unto them, An enemy hath done this." We may not try to explain the mystery of iniquity, or how or why God permits evil to work, though even here perhaps He lets us see some glimpses, not inadequate to our need. But that there is malicious evil there, is indeed abundantly plain. And this is not God's work. The work of evil, the malice of the enemy, is not the work of God.

Think then of the power of evil,—of the slavery and the suffering which the malice of the evil one does inflict, in this world, on the bodies and souls of men. We cannot, indeed, think of evil, in the abstract, as having a personal, or indeed a real, existence. But there are personal existences (whence-

soever they are fallen) which are evil. No denial of the personality of evil will undo the undoubted reality of evil personalities. There is a devil, and a power of the devil. The kingdom of Satan in this world is a terrible reality: and the kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of anguish and of malice. There are indeed parts of the heathen world, in which the kingdom of the devil seems to reign with a hideous directness of power, beyond anything which we can imagine in a Christian land. But even in our Christian land: in our towns: in our villages: how great is even now the power of the evil one, for malicious slavery, and for malicious suffering!

Is the power of the devil broken and gone from our parishes? nay, strike home more closely, —ask of our families, our households, our own secret hearts' consciousness: is the power of evil broken? and its slavery? and its suffering? does the will of God's perfect beneficence always and only prevail?

Or again, is this power of the devil, for malicious slavery and for malicious suffering, is it only confined to suffering and slavery that are directly spiritual: or to such sufferings only in the physical world, as are visibly the direct outcome of sin and vice? or who knows that his power is not, so far as he has power, a power to torment in things bodily as well as spiritual, by scourges, and pains, and terrible physical catastrophes? We all remember how in the book of Job, the murderous

onsets of robbers and enemies, the storm, and the destroying lightning, and the hurricane, are spoken of as the direct work of the devil's malice.¹ Is this peculiar to the book of Job? Is it only an imagery of speech, belonging to very ancient poetry? At all events, S. Paul is content to echo the same thought, when, in a passage which, to him, is anything but imaginatively poetical, he calls his own thorn in the flesh, "the messenger of Satan sent to buffet me."² Yes, and so is our Lord Himself, when He speaks of the afflicted woman who "was bowed together and could in no wise lift up herself" as one "whom Satan hath bound, lo! these eighteen years."³

As with Job, as with S. Paul, so with us, his mischief may be our trial, and may become our purifying. His mischief may be transmuted, by the power of God's love, into the fire of exquisitely loving refinement. Yet apart from that after use of love: apart from Divine transmutation, it still may have been, in itself, the mischief of evil. If the kingdom of Christ is in the midst of us, transforming, glorious, certainly the kingdom of Satan is with us too.

But if the kingdom of evil is still over against the kingdom of Christ, if malice and mischief do mar God's will of love; do we know how much of the loss may be due to our own default? can we measure how vast, how magnificent the work which is waiting to be wrought by the earnestness

¹ Job i.² 2. Cor. xii. 7.³ Luke xiii. 16.

of Christian prayer? There is no equipoise of power between evil and good. God is infinitely mightier than Satan. Good is omnipotent; evil is rottenness of strength. Yet God does not in a word sweep evil away. For what does He wait? He waits for that for which He deigns to care, which it is His purpose, in our life, to win: He waits for the service of our will. He would have us enter into His will by prayer: in personal effort of prayer take the side of His will; and consecrating our will to His will in earnest intensity of desire and request, with Him fight against evil, appeal to Him against evil;—yes, by prayer move and wield against evil the irresistible might of the will of sovereign good.

True prayer, prayer according to God's will, is an engine of tremendous power. In default of it, evil streams in and prevails. But prayer that is one with God's will, by the power of God's will smites and conquers evil;—till God's will is perfectly done, whose will is perfect love. Do even we, with our weak foresight, with our shadowy echo of love, desire what is good and loving for those we love? It is ours to wield the very will of love by prayer. What love have we, if we will not use the omnipotent weapon of love? If we will not pray, evil enslaves and torments. God, in the depth of His wisdom, cares for, demands, nay waits for, the consecration, in spiritual effort, of our earnestness of will. He will have us, through will-effort uplifted

into prayer, by entering into, move, and wield the almightiness of His will. The prayer of a Christian makes itself one with God's will; and thereby (since God so wills) unloosens (as it were) and sets free God's will, to move according to the proper law of God's will;—God's will which is the crushing of evil, and the life of love and joy.

Does any one say that God's will is always done anyhow? Why, what would then become of the Lord's prayer? I do not urge now the thought of the deepened consciousness of battle and enemy which breathes in the new translation of its latest clause, "deliver us from the evil one:" but what meaning would there be left in the words of the text, that brief summary, the substance and meaning of the true prayer of the world, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven!" how meaningless, if His will is so done, in like sense, anyhow!

Or will any one say that Christian prayer *must*, at bottom, be an effort to bend or change the will of God? No, just because prayer is identified with God's will, therefore *overwhelming* is the power which God bids us to exert, and gives us to exert, in prayer. By prayer we are instruments of God's will, to bring God's will to bear with victorious omnipotence against evil,—the evil which enslaves and torments—ourselves, or our dear ones, or our brethren in all the world. Our prayers are to be a continual, conscious, earnest effort of battle,

the battle against whatever is not God's will. Whether God's will is done, or is not done, in the midst of us, depends largely, depends marvellously, on the truth of our prayer.

Certainly we will not own, either that prayer must be, in its ultimate nature, an effort on man's part to change the will of God: or that, if all its effort is within God's will, we shall lose one jot of the energy, one spark of the burning vehemence, of the strain and battle of prayer.

There is indeed an enemy—but it is not God. Prayer is indeed a conflict—but not against God. Persistent prayer is a victory—but not over God.

It is the devil's malice that is threatening, every day, our own and our dear ones' welfare, of body and soul. To us is given the magnificent prerogative of fighting, and of prevailing, by earnest consecration of will in prayer.

In prayer that God's will may be changed?—no, but that God's will may be done! And the more we so pray, the more identified we are in the very breath of our spirit and will and life, with the will of the Spirit of God, so much the more will God's will work and rule in all the life that is round us.

The will of God, the unthwarted triumph, the perfect consummation, of God's divine will of holiness and of love, this is the inalienable might, this is the perfect victory, of true Christian praying.

XX

PRAYER 3

“If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?”—S. MATT. vii. 11.

THESE words form part of our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, when He urges men into constancy and urgency of praying. Just at this point He throws His teaching into argumentative form. The argument is from our parental wisdom and love to His. Have we, as parents, forethought? That forethought is but the dimmest reflection of His. Have we, as parents, a real love? That love is but as the most distant shadow of Him. If then, His wisdom alike, and His love, transcend so infinitely all that love or wisdom in a human parent can mean: what then? therefore leave all to Him? therefore abstain from praying as impertinent? If any man's rational argument seems to suggest this conclusion, he must at least be struck by the fact, that it is the very opposite to the conclusion of Christ. With Him, the words of the text, the illustration of the stone, and the serpent, the argument from parental love to Divine, all are parts of His insistence upon—of

His expansion of—the authoritative precept with which the paragraph begins ;—“ Ask, and it shall be given you : seek, and ye shall find : knock, and it shall be opened unto you : For every one that asketh receiveth : and he that seeketh findeth : and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

Observe : the whole strain of the argument clearly implies that God is not instructed by man’s prayer. If we pray according to our wisest forethought—for ourselves or for others—God transcends it. If we pray with the most glowing inspiration of love,—God transcends it. Not to instruct His wisdom ; not to inflame His love ; not to change His will, or raise His purpose to the level of ours :—the whole illustration excludes the idea that the truth of prayer is, or can be, *this*.

But whilst we recognize that true prayer in man is man’s aspiration upwards towards the wisdom and love and holiness, which are God : that it is man’s strenuous effort of will, to will with—and, by willing, to work towards—the will of God, so that God’s will, which is perfectness, may be perfectly done on earth : we cannot but be struck withal to see, with what solemn—I would almost say with what startling—emphasis of earnestness, God commands, expects, and awaits, this exerting and uplifting of the effort of the will of man. God, in Christ, is ever educating man, towards the image of God which alone is man’s perfectness. If God, in His teach-

ing of man, sets such an infinite value upon man's prayer, and bids such vast issues wait and hang upon it: must we not feel ourselves, through this insight into the meaning of prayer, urged and driven into praying, as we never had been before? God's will is against *all* evil. Yet He sets such store upon winning man's will to breathe and work with His own; He gives such prerogative of dignity to the divine will-effort of the spirit of man; that without this co-operation of man's prayerful will-effort, He does not put forth the power of His will against evil. He bids His own work wait upon man's prayer; till, by man's prayer, the victorious work of good may become not God's work only, but man's work with God. So infinitely does He value our seeking and asking!

Those who think of prayer as an effort to *improve on* God's will; or those who think that, whether we pray or not, God's will alike is always and anyhow done, on earth as in Heaven: may well, little by little, lose their sense of the vital reality, of the infinite momentousness, of prayer. But if, when we will not pray,—consecrating before God our God-given power of will to the active service of His will,—through this our incredulous disobedience, love and holiness wait, and the tyrannies of evil grow in power to enslave and torment: what a vast work is this which depends every day on our prayer, and is wrecked by our prayerlessness? It is not that our prayers in themselves have strength to crush evil; but

that, if we *will with* Him, then God's will into which we have, by prayer, willingly entered, goes forth in its might, conquering for us, and to conquer. The force exerted by prayer which enters into God's will, is no less than the infinite force of the will of God.

The will of God is holiness, wisdom, and love. If any, the least, meditation upon God; upon what He is, and what He wills; upon what our relation is to Him (we, whose whole being is the birth of the thought of His love!); upon what His relation is to us (He who made us for capacity of His love!); if any realization of the being of God makes it in a moment too plain to us—that, in this world as we know it, there is something other than the perfectly simple echo of His will: the same thought, at the same time, will show us also, clearly as in a mirror, apart from any other necessity of argument, what a self-contradictory foolishness would be involved in a prayer that meant to prevail against God's will. What? our wise foresight bend itself to correct perfect wisdom? our yearning affection strive, in love's name, to overrule perfect love? our most mixed will towards holiness set the standard to the dazzling holiness of God? What *could* prayer that realized God, desire, in its loftiest aspiration, half so much, as very goodness and love,—that is, as God Himself?

And then one more aspect of the thought, which grows out of this. He who kneels before

God in prayer for whatever is holy or true, he is not therein dealing with one wholly different from himself; with an alien will set over against his own; with a distinct, contrasted, external personality. True it is, indeed, that God is not we, and that we are not God. Yet we were made for God's likeness, and into God's likeness does man grow even in prayer. So far as there may be in the man's own prayerful will anything that is true, just so far it is one already with truth, which is God. So far as there is any spark of real holiness or love, just so far God whom he entreats is in him already, entreating as well as entreated. He is not, then, in prayer beseeching a contrasted person; not trying to make appeal to an alien will. The will which he is beseeching is the will of Goodness, of Beauty, of Life: the will, which, just so far as his own will is true, is the transcendent perfection of his own will. It is all that his own will longs to be, only that it is far more: and yet one already with his own will, just so far as in his own will there is, by God's grace, any goodness or beauty or life. There is here no winning to oneself of another who wills diversely: rather it is a step in the aspiring of the self towards the self's own perfectness. We are not God. Yet the true self finds its completeness only in God. Our true effort of prayer is a rising towards our own true perfectness of will, as necessarily and as certainly, as it is an uplifting towards God.

But pass again from thoughts like these,—lest our conclusion about prayer should sound anywise abstract or remote. Though we be willing to own that prayer may ideally mean such uplifting of man's will into God's; yet still we may say there are prayers many and pressing, which are not exactly this. The passage from the Sermon on the Mount, with which we started, suggests things more material, more various; all the dutiful homely prayers of our every-day homely needs. So then let us come back to the thought of these; back to all the simple fulness of daily detail. "Ask and ye shall have. Seek and ye shall find." "In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." We have wants, and we feel them: honest wants of body as of soul, wants personal, wants domestic, as well as all such aspirations as may seem to be of wider or higher scope. Are not these things true and proper subjects of prayer? "Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven" is not, after all, the whole of the Lord's prayer. Is it not followed at once by the more material—"Give us this day our daily bread?" Yes, most true indeed. Every need for body or soul, for ourselves or our children, our friends or our neighbours, in all the detail and variety which belongs to vivid personal interest; it is all most true and holy subject-matter for prayer. Only, as we turn back from our former thoughts to these, there is something from our

former thoughts which will necessarily come with us, and will enter into every one of these petitions. We shall never again be able so to pray for any one of these things, as simply, and as it were at all costs, to beg God to grant it. For there is one paramount desire, which will go with us, as paramount, at every moment. "If it be possible let this cup pass away from me: *nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*"

When we really have learnt our lesson, then "Thy will be done" becomes in itself no longer, as possibly of old, the prayerful sigh of a dim and sad resignation: it is rather the most moving, the most vehement, the most victorious desire within our hearts. And so in its introduction into other prayers, through all the manifold variety of detail of petitions for "daily bread," this finale, often expressed, as it will be, and always understood, becomes no longer, as perhaps it was once of old, a mere dutiful half-rebellious appendix to our praying, a mere reluctant necessary tag; but on the contrary it grows to be, more and more, the main essence and true life of our whole prayer. Our prayer is this first and most. It is this more vitally than it is anything else. Do we ask for relief—for ourselves or for our dear ones—from sickness, from anxiety, from bereavement? Do we ask for strength, for livelihood, for guidance, for success? It is well. Yet we recognize that, if we could learn quite aright, our greater longing, even in these, would be for the perfectly un-

thwarted consummation of God's divinely wise and loving will. In so far as these things, which in detail we ask for, are, or may be, within the divinely beneficent will of God: in so far as any tormenting influence of evil is, or may be, in the withholding of them, thwarting the highest perfectness of Divine benevolence; so far we entreat Him, by the uniting of our earnest will with His will for all good, to let us taste in these things His perfect love. But if any one of these blessings, as they seem to us, should in its innermost truth be really no blessing: if any one of these evils, as they seem to us, should really have in it nothing of evil or malice, but rather be part itself of the absolutely tender discipline of God's love: so far we would really not choose what was not the reality of good: so far we would not, for the world, miss that Divine touch of sharp love, which because it indeed was pain, had seemed to us so like evil. "Thy will not mine" would no longer feebly qualify: it would precede, it would transcend, it would animate through and through, every form of "our daily bread."

Just one thought more, in conclusion. There are minds, perhaps, which would at first be almost appalled, if they realized how great power is given to prayer; and how great issues do, by God's will, depend on consecration of human will,—on human effort to work with, and to call forth, God's will by praying. So vast is the watchfulness and the resource, as well as the malevolence,

of evil, that if in any sense it depends on us to appeal, at every turn, to God's will against it, through prayer; shall we not, they would ask, through mere human weakness and oversight, forget to pray against a thousand perils, for ourselves and those we love, and so by default, leave open the door for evil? Shall we ever have strength to come up to such a strain of task and responsibility? Shall we not, try as we will, and pray as we may, be utterly merged and lost in the infinite vastness of the needs for praying? Nay, if evil is watchful, God is everywhere. If evil seems resourceful, God is far mightier. It is good to pray as He enables; it is good to carry to Him such completeness of need as we can. Yet He does not depend on our memory, nor require all details from us. What He does require is the genuine consecration and uplifting of our will. The earnestness of a man's prayer cannot be measured by length of time, or of words; by fulness of memory, or detail. Not extension so much as intensity, is the measure of will. And as will is, so is prayer.

We may indeed mar true prayer by a wilful indolence. But if sincere minds sometimes feel discouraged, because such effort as they can hope to make in prayer and intercession seems to cover but little ground: it is well perhaps to remember how really, how divinely, the whole range of thought and being may be covered at once, if ever, with real outpouring and uplifting, we truly

breathe from our hearts—we with such chastened thoughtfulness as, after our sins, God has granted us,—or our children in the lisping guilelessness of infancy—that one word of most simple, yet all-inclusive, prayer, “Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven.”

XXI

CHRIST PRAYING

“And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone.”—S. MATT. xiv. 23.

It is easy—and no doubt it is right—to conceive of the life of the Son of God on earth, as a life of perpetual prayer. The essential attitude of whole-hearted dependence on God, the essential attitude of prayerful relation to God, was, no doubt, never broken or relaxed. None the less we are compelled to notice that He was not, if we may use the phrase in reverence, He was not above making use of the external conditions which conduce to concentration of the soul in prayer.

Thus He did not regard His active work, however divinely beneficial, nor His conversation and teaching, however divinely informed and informing, as being already in any such sense prayer, as to dispense with times, times frequently recurring and often long-continued, which were reserved for prayer, and for nothing but prayer, as prayer.

Again, in His times of prayer He did not

disdain such accessory helps, as withdrawal, solitude, silence, and such natural surroundings as shut out the turmoil of the world, and make for tranquillity. On the mountain, under the stars, looking down upon the sea : in the shade of the garden, with the moonlight surrounding : these, and such as these, are the settings within which the picture of Jesus praying is in fact presented to us, in the Gospel History.

Something there is of lesson,—of reproof often, I believe, as well as of comfort,—in this thought of the simple accessories of the picture. The man who is inclined to merge explicit prayer in a general attitude of dependent and devotional service ; or the man who claims that a Christian can meditate on God as well in the rush of men as in solitude or in Church ; is dispensing with aids which were not dispensed with by Jesus Christ.

There is, however, a further lesson which I wish to try and gather from Jesus praying ; a lesson as to the very essence of prayer. What is that after all, which constitutes the central reality of prayer ?

A great deal of our natural thought, and of our instinctive language, about prayer, is shaped by, and does match, a conception of prayer, which perhaps, as conception, we should hesitate to defend. And yet, though inadequate, it is not untrue. Though we may get beyond it, we almost *must* begin with it. Though we may in

a sense disown it, we have to deal with it, and to use it, and to grow by it. This is the conception of prayer as based upon the desire for things which we lack and need. Because we lack them, we desire them: and because we desire them, we shape and consecrate our desire as prayer to God. The root of the matter, then, is our own deficiency, and the consciousness in ourselves that we are deficient. But if the root of prayer is conscious deficiency, then the greater the deficiency, and the consciousness of it, the greater (it would seem) would be the *intensity* of the prayer. Whilst on the other hand, as we grew in grace and in strength, as the essential deficiency was less and less; we should in proportion as we knew the truth, and were not deceived into supposing ourselves more deficient than we were; have less and less of incentive to, or capacity of, prayer.

Or again, we might put it in another way. If prayer is an asking for benefits, whether material or spiritual, which we have not got: it would seem reasonable to add, "and which we cannot easily reckon on getting." That is to say, there would be this further implication in earnest prayer, namely, a lack of perfect confidence in the will of the person prayed to. Then the more we doubted, the greater would be the vehemency of our entreating. But the more perfectly we could trust, the less room would there be for any vehement prayer.

It seems to follow from this whole way of conceiving prayer, that the greater the growth in true godliness and in perfect confidence,—the more divine in spirit a man could be conceived to be, so much the less would there continue to be in him of the energy of prayer, as energy, or as prayer.

Now it *is* worth while to put these things to ourselves, because they are as a test to an instinctive conception of the nature of prayer which has a place in experience so practical and true, that we *are* in some danger of being at least perplexed, if not misled, by it.

Is, then, prayer an asking for things (of whatever character) which we have not, or are not sure of having? We turn back to the Gospel picture of Jesus praying: and feel at once that whatever relation any such instinct of prayer may have to our own earliest apprenticeship in praying, it is certainly at fault as anything like a leading conception of the essential reality of prayer.

On the contrary, it is plain that where deficiency is least; nay, where there is no deficiency at all, and no illusion as to deficiency; where confident certainty is most confidently certain, and the presence and nature of God are realized without any reserve or dimness at all: there it is that prayer is at its highest perfectness, as prayer.

Then there is another,—a deeper, and in some respects a darker, conception of what is involved

in the nature of prayer. We learn to think of it, truly enough, as a tremendous weapon in a deadly struggle. It is our appeal to the holiness of God : our appeal to it, as irresistible spiritual force. It is, by God's own appointment, the method by which man's spirit, yearning with and to God, unlocks and sets free for the unhindered work of the will of its own beneficence, the very almightiness of God.

The spiritual power of Divine goodness—always beneficent alike, and always omnipotent,—was yet waiting on the willingness of man : waiting to be, as it were, set free to act with all its irresistible power in the lives and characters of men, by man's conscious appeal, man's effort of self-identification, of meaning and spirit, with it.

Prayer is a weapon, a mighty weapon in a terrible conflict. Prayer is an appeal to, and an unloosing of, power. It is a wielding, for the spiritual necessities of men, of the spiritual omnipotence of God. To view it thus, is to view it in its relation to that adverse power, because of which, and against which, it is wielded.

“Spiritual wickedness in high places,” “the rulers of the darkness of this world”: the thought of these, the thought of the terrible reality and the terrible power of the adversaries, becomes a constituent element,—becomes almost the basis, and explanation, of what we most essentially

mean by praying. "Deliver us from the evil one" is a thought which then so underlies our whole meaning, and effort, in praying: that even the earlier petitions of the typical prayer—"Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done—give us this day our daily bread," and the rest of them, find no small part of their essential significance,—of what may be called the inner sting of their meaning—in this conclusion in which they culminate,—“and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one.” Then we can hardly define prayer, we can hardly account for prayer; or give any adequate explanation of its place or significance, either in practical experience, or in abstract thought; except in reference to, and (as it were) in terms of, the conflict and the enemy.

What shall we say then? That either of these conceptions is untrue? Surely each is too deeply rooted in experience for that. Prayer *is* an asking for benefits of which we stand in need. Prayer is an appeal to, and wielding of, the power of God's will, in the terrible conflict against evil. And yet does either conception—or do both together—exhaust the true significance of prayer?

The picture of Jesus, kneeling in prayer to God,—tranquil, sinless, sovereign: Jesus, in whom was no deficiency: Jesus whose sovereign petition might, in a moment, wield the might of twelve legions of angels; suggests an aspect of prayer, of which neither craving need nor desperate

struggle gives the key. These are aspects, or phases, of prayer, through which imperfect experience must pass: which, it may be, imperfect experience will not transcend. But is the rationale of prayer in them? Is there not something which prayer essentially is, besides these moods or aspects which it wears, under our conditions of varying disability? Is there not something, which will outlive all conditions of disability, and will yet be, in its essence, what prayer was? Even if we should say that prayer is merged in fruition, and cannot outlive beatitude; that it is in relation to the unconsummated condition that it retains its distinctive character, as prayer (which is saying perhaps more than we are able to say): yet is there not that, in consummated beatitude, which is essentially the very same thing which was prayer: the conditions only, not the inner essence, being changed?

Look at Jesus, remaining through the long hours, in tranquillity of spirit, with God. Is not the central reality of His prayer, and therefore of prayer, in its perfect meaning, in this: this which includes and transcends alike the petition of need, and the stress of battle:—this inner communing, thought to thought, with God: this reflection of Spirit in Spirit; this perfecting of character in reciprocal intercourse: this shaping, in mutual converse, of mind, meaning, and will: this response of love to love: this unveiledness of face; this reflecting, as a mirror, of the being

of God : this transfiguration, wherein man, as man, becomes himself a very image of God : growing progressively on from glory to glory : which is indeed the proper fruit of the Spirit,— the Spirit which is the Lord ?

XXII

THE SOLDIER'S IDEAL

“ . . . Ye are not your own ; for ye were bought with a price.”
—1 COR. vi. 19, 20.

THESE words have a very marked and solemn context of their own. For the moment, I do not explore, I only allude to their context. But alike in their own context, and apart from it, the words in themselves are noteworthy.

The phrase, “ye are bought with a price,” both here, and again in the 23rd verse of the next chapter, is no doubt primarily a metaphor; and it refers to the purchase of a bondslave. The relation of a purchased slave to the master who has justly and lawfully purchased him, this is the familiar relation, upon which the thought is based. The slave lives, and breathes, and thinks, and works, and fears, and suffers, and rejoices, and hopes: but he no longer has the right to do these things for himself: his capacities, his experiences, are the property of another.

Now however immoral this relation may be between man and man, in anything like the ideal fulness of its meaning: the terms which properly describe it are not unapt to describe the ideal

relation of the Christian to Christ. The ideal Christian does do all these things; he hopes, and rejoices, and suffers, and fears, and works, he thinks, and breathes, and lives,—neither by, nor for, himself, but for, and by, Christ. He is Christ's, even more than he is his own: or rather he is most truly and completely his own, not in proportion as he keeps himself to himself, but in proportion as he learns what it is to be Christ's. If the slave is the chattel of his owner, the ideal Christian is, in all that he is, the perpetual image and echo of his Master. All his life is lived, all his thought and will are framed, so that they may be the expression of another. His whole consciousness is dependent. His whole meaning, and conduct, and discipline, always is shaping itself in reference to another's determining will. Ideally, his person is the expression of Christ to the world: as Christ, in His character on earth, was the visible expression of God. If then, in a sense, it is true that we depend upon, and belong to, one another, it is true also, and with a far more direct and sweeping inclusiveness, that we both depend upon, and belong to, one who is our absolute Master—both of body and soul.

The metaphor of the text receives its natural comment in the phrase that S. Paul was not slow to apply to himself, when he called himself so often and so gladly, "Paul the bonds slave of Jesus Christ."¹ Strictly speaking, there is no

¹ Rom., Phil., Titus i. 1.

limit to the dependence upon the Person of Christ which these words express and were intended to express. In reference to Him, everything else whatever, be it what it may, is held only as subordinate, and as relative.

But it is possible that the metaphor, as metaphor, may come home to our thought the less, because the slavery of which it speaks is a conception for which our thought hardly has place. We neither, on the one hand, understand it easily: nor, on the other, can tolerate in thought so much as we understand:—not even perhaps enough to learn from it the lessons which it does contain. But if so, we may perhaps illuminate it a little, by taking, along with this, another phrase, which expresses much, though perhaps not the whole, of its meaning: and which has the advantage of speaking straight home, as the first phrase does not, to the imagination of every one of us.

If, in the opening of the epistle to the Philippians, Timothy is associated with Paul, under the common phrase, “bondservants of Christ Jesus,” S. Paul when he writes his second epistle to Timothy, bids him (I quote from the R.V.) “suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” Here also the metaphor is intended to speak of a life which a man does *not* live by his own whims, for himself. It is precisely the reference of everything in the life to the self, and the personal whims, which is most expressly meant to be excluded. The life, and

the powers of the life, belong to somebody else. And that the powers of the life may be what they ought to be for the service of the king, there is need of the discipline, the endurance of hardship, of which the verse speaks. This discipline that is spoken of is part of the habitual life. It is not an extreme or occasional possibility, to which a man may be liable. It is rather the sort of habitual texture of his life, which makes him to be exactly what he is. He is a man, who by a certain relation to hardness of external and regular conditions, has perfected his powers for soldiership, or has acquired powers which he could hardly be said to have had before. It is the ideal soldier, in thorough training and in perfect discipline, who is here held up, because of his training and discipline, as an instructive pattern for the Christian life.

Now whatever elements there may sometimes be of what is coarse or ungodlike in the average soldier, as he is, the ideal soldier is a singularly striking ideal. He is a man who on one whole side of his nature, the side of bodily excellence (and many things really flow from bodily excellence which are not at first sight bodily), has perfected to the highest point the habit of instinctive self-command. He does not undervalue—rather he has found much moral value in—gymnastic excellence. His body is a disciplined servant. His obedience is prompt and thorough: his sense of duty overruling. To waste time in thinking whether he should do

his duty or not, or to do it tardily, grudgingly, with the maximum of imperfection and complaint, would offend his whole professional conscience. He is not argumentative, or cynical, or critical. He is at all times prompt and punctual, straight, and brisk, and cheery, of eye and of heart. His whole habit of life, the very carriage of his body, belie the possibility of languid and indolent self-pleasing in bodily things. A certain ideal is embodied in him, and he is become the expression of the ideal; and it constrains him to find his pride and his life in obeying, quite instantly and quite completely, the most unexpected and unwelcome of orders.

If in the different things which belong to the outdoor life of bodily excellence, he seems to others even reckless, what would be reckless in others is perhaps not always so with him. For it is part of the characteristic value of his life, its value not primarily to himself, but to others for whose sake he is what he is, that his accuracy of eye, his firmness and sureness of hand, above all his perfect balance of nerve in daring, should be as consummately skilful, as discipline and habit can make them. It is *more* important that eye, hand, and nerve should be true, than that he should be scrupulous to avoid all danger of accident. So far is self-protection, in life and in limb, from being the primary object, for the sake of his work in life: that the work for which he lives can hardly be done without

a discipline which implies *practised* indifference to such dangers as may cost either limb or life. The sureness and skill and nerve which make him what he is, in perfection of bodily discipline, are a sureness and skill and nerve, such as must needs imply, for they are largely fashioned out of, the familiarly surrounding presence of danger.

And there are things about him, as we know, more unselfish and pathetic than this. For while he enters fully into all the possibilities of activity and of joy which life holds for the vigorous and the noble-hearted, he has learnt to hold them all, without exception, as secondary to a fixed and immovable devotion, which, if need be, must take precedence of them all. All that life means, its possessions, and pursuits, its purposes and possibilities, its ties of affection, even the deepest and the most sacred;—it is part of the high ideal which he embodies, to be ready to be detached, in a moment, from them all. Though he hold to them never so closely, yet he holds to them still as subordinate to a call and a claim, which may at any moment override them, and to which they are pledged beforehand to give way. And if the call comes, he answers it in no spirit of reluctance or rebellious gloominess, but with a confident step and a cheerful heart. This confidence does not mean an unwarranted or imaginary certainty of his own safe return from the battle. Yet it is his pride and his honour to answer with alacrity, because

his ideal has trained him to hold all these relations, the relations which are dearest to him, and in respect of which he is dearest, yea beyond all price or thought! to many others,—just as freely as he holds his own limbs and health and life,—not as objects in themselves final and absolute, but rather as the very appointed conditions in and by which he—and they—can live dutifully and well, and show themselves to be, in the hour of trial, that which alone it was worth living to be. And so, if God's will be so, in the thrill, in the horror, of battle, he leaves them all in a moment; leaves all the fulness that life meant to him, midway; struck down by a death, on the one hand wholly preventable and premature, on the other hand wholly dutiful, and therefore wholly ripe and complete before God.

Remember that every word of such a description as this, while it is the realism of familiar experience (for, if few soldiers reach the perfect ideal, surely not a little of all this *is* common experience), is also a direct parable and lesson in the meaning of the Christian profession and life. The true soldier's life realizes a magnificent ideal. But even the soldier's life does not realize it in the highest form, or under the highest conditions, of which the ideal is capable: and meanwhile the ideal itself, in its essential character, is the ideal, not of the soldier's profession only, but of the baptismal profession of every one who calls himself by the Christian name.

“Ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price.” Ye are the sworn soldiers, and even more, the very bondslaves,—of a perfect Lord. Your lives, and every possibility that your lives contain, belong absolutely to another, whose service is the only reality of your own freedom, or your own perfection. With the dutiful devotion before your eyes of so many, even very average, soldiers,—behind whose common life nevertheless an ideal peeps out, which has some reflection of Divine light upon it,—do not go back to plan out your hours or your weeks for private enjoyment merely, or even private interest, as though your time, or your aims, or your powers, or in any way your lives, belonged simply to yourselves. Dutifulness, allegiance, obedience, prompt, thorough, cheerful, and complete, the obedience of self-surrender and self-dedication; these are indispensable qualities of the life of every loyal soldier and servant of Christ.

XXIII

EMPIRE

“Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold He taketh up the isles as a very small thing.”—ISAIAH xl. 15.

THE words of Isaiah are words of divine encouragement. To the captive people, crushed to the dust by military force, a force which in actual experience had been *felt* to be irresistible, he says, in the name of God, that irresistible military force is, before God, as nothing. It may be—it is—for the moment, God’s instrument; the instrument which He has Himself prepared, to do what He wills to be done. But as *against* God’s counsel; as *against* the eternal principles and purposes of His government of the world, the concert of the nations arrayed in arms, the combined artillery of the world, is *nothing*.

This is the eternal truth, which in these early chapters of the second part of Isaiah, is magnificently set forth. It is set forth for comfort, to those who have a right to be assured that, though they now are under the heel of the nations, yet the real purpose, and spirit, of God is with them. It is the real purpose, and spirit, of God, which through all

adverse conditions, of oppression, dispersion, and captivity, will alone prevail.

It neither is brute force, nor random chance, whereby the kingdoms of the world are governed. It is God, after all, who rules : and neither massive armaments, nor policies cunningly devised, have any power at all when they cross His will. "Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; . . . that bringeth princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." On the other hand, as of Him is the confounding weakness of the strong, so in Him is the confounding strength of the weak : "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary : there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall : but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

Such is the nature, in these chapters, of the prophetic encouragement to captive Israel, a prophetic testimony which, as in the splendour of its utterance, so in its divine depth of insight into

God, and therefore into the meaning and guidance of the affairs of men, which we call politics, may, to say the very least, challenge comparison with any political utterance which the world has ever heard.

But what is true for the captives is true also for their adversaries. Such a lesson is necessarily two-sided, and its teaching is for all, who have faculties to discern and read the teaching. The truth is truth, if there be but the power of discerning it, as well for the magnates of the imperial nations, as for the children of the captivity. Those who, by God's appointment, exercise in this world imperial dominion, are set to exercise it according to the purpose and will of God.

It is possible, indeed, that they may be blind instruments, misconceiving, for their own pride or purposes of selfishness, the meaning of the dominion which is given to them. In that case, the discipline of God, of which they were once blind instruments or ministers, will be turned by-and-by against them, to their own utter ruin, as it was against the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchies long ago. But Christian nations have no right to be,—if indeed they *can* be altogether so long as they are Christian—mere instruments of blindness. Dominion is a stewardship; and is conferred by God. Yet God does not take a nation, as it were at random, and place it by an arbitrary act, in a position of imperial responsibility. Such responsibility is acquired by degrees, and is, in God's providence,

acquired through the exercise of qualities, which are themselves, or should be, a real enabling towards the responsibility which grows up through them.

Even force is not force merely, as blind chance. The qualities which make a military nation are for the most part very closely akin to moral greatness. The people who cannot, or will not, be as men in the duty of battle, can hardly be as men in the security of peace. Though war be a scourge and a curse: though war be devilish: yet in nothing is it more conspicuous than in war how the devilish may be wrought into the divine. And whatever war may be in itself, capacity for effectiveness in war is not devilish. Impossible though it might be to say absolutely that military grandeur could not be found without moral basis, or moral grandeur which did not ever show itself as military power; yet exceptions on either side, however real, may, obscure, but do not overthrow, the truth that these two are, even strangely, akin. Greatness of moral character is very near to the strength which is most invincible in battle. Certainly to us who look, with mingled feelings, backwards upon the wonderful record, and forwards upon the boundless opportunity, which we sum up in a phrase as "British Empire," there can be, in this thought, no paradox. The conditions which have made our country great in the way of empire are essentially those which have made her greatness in moral character also. It is moral fibre, it is discipline which rules self to the

point of self-sacrifice, it is the surrender of all the conditions of life, and of life itself, for the purposes which make life worth living; it is things like these, very near to the true essence of the religious spirit, which give to the men of any nation, self-command and self-control, and courage, and endurance through disaster: and (what is in the long run no whit less important) which give also to the women of any nation that more difficult, more exacting, more heroic courage, which makes them, with their eyes open to their own immeasurable sacrifice, yet act not as an encumbrance nor an enfeebling of spirit, but a very inspiration of strength and faith to the men. Even force, then, is not force brutally or merely. It is moral force which really dominates the world; not in antithesis against, but rather (with whatever apparent exceptions) as a real basis of, material power.

But the present point is rather to insist that, when moral qualities like these have produced their fruit as imperial dominion, all the facts alike of the past record, and the present opportunity, are together misconceived and misread, unless it is effectually recognized that, just as the moral qualities which issued in empire had a basis which was of God, so the real purpose and use of the empire when attained, must be God's use and purpose altogether. Dominion is a stewardship, conferred by God, and is intended neither for the swelling of the material comfort, nor for the glory and pride, of the ruling nation; but that they

may duly execute, as stewards, the purposes of God, for the sake of which alone they have been trained and fitted as instruments.

If Dominion is a Divine stewardship, and its purpose is the purpose of God in it: the primary duty of those to whom dominion is given, is, in their rule, to represent and exhibit God. When their stewardship comes to its hour of searching trial, and the question is raised,—as raised it must certainly be—whether the dominion shall be prolonged, or be taken from their hands; the answer will really turn, in the long run, upon the degree in which they have been faithful to their primary trust.

There are many ways in which God is exhibited. The administration of justice, incorrupt and inflexible, is in its way a true manifestation of God. So is large and tolerant mercy, philanthropic self-sacrifice, ungrudging service to the necessities of all. So is sympathy, not of heart only but of imagination, the generous appreciation, in personal modesty and meekness, of the ideals of others; and their capacities of development along the proper line of their own ideals. I do not ask now how far, in fact, British dominion has succeeded, or failed, in representing God in each of these different ways. At least it is true that these, and other characteristics like these, are real elements in a true representation of God. And the true root of all these is the conscious and deliberate service of God.

So true is this, that we may well be doubtful—

all superficial appearance to the contrary notwithstanding,—whether all these, whether even any one of these, can, *in the long run*, be effectively maintained, where it is not both consciously and avowedly based upon the service, and enabling power, of God. Be the richness of the outward foliage, for a time, what it may: they will all fail, sooner or later, at the root, except their ultimate root be *godliness*.

It is not necessary, in order that dominion may be according to God, that it should go about to preach or to proselytize: still less that it should proselytize or preach at the cost of inflexible fairness, or of reverent sympathy for the thoughts and feelings of the governed. But however strict and reverent may be its observance of Christian equity, it will nevertheless necessarily come to pass, as the years go round, that both the government, and the governors with whom it is personally identified, will be felt, and felt truly, to be, *either* essentially Christian, or essentially not: either animated with the religious aspiration and temper, or religiously indifferent. I speak of government and governors in no merely narrow and technical sense. In India, for example, the words would mean, not exclusively, though in part, the Viceroy or his deputies. They would rather mean the British people as a whole.

No one indeed, and no nation, has been in all points wholly exemplary in faithfulness. Yet the question, when it is raised, can perhaps be an-

swered, whether one or another exercise of dominion has, on the whole, been approached and wielded in the spirit of dutifulness to the service of God, or in selfish folly and pride. No doubt it will not be wholly of one kind. There may be true effort even amid much failure. There may be failure, educating towards recovery. God may be very long-suffering in patience. But when the point is reached at which it can truly be said—not only that a nation has not succeeded in fulfilling the trust which God gave to it, but that it is visibly losing (or has even effectually lost) the capacity of being, for the purpose, a true representative of God, assuredly its days of stewardship, or in other words its days of dominion, are numbered.

There was much (as it seemed) to illustrate this principle in the earlier records of Christianity in Ceylon. Ceylon, and the task of representing Christianity there, or at least in the parts accessible from the sea, lay by God's providence for about 150 years in the hands of the Portuguese. For something like another 150 years, the same stewardship was with the Dutch. For nearly 100 years it has been with the British. It is difficult to read the account, on the religious side, of either of the earlier dominions, without feeling that the trust was not, in either case, removed, till a point was reached at which there had not been merely lack of success, but it had become a practical impossibility that the Christianity of the island

should grow out of the methods of the existing regime. The Portuguese, as stewards for Christ, had been so tolerant of heathen forms of thought and ceremony, so ready to adopt them wholesale, and sanction them as Christian with differences hardly perceptible to the popular mind, so much more eager for the use, than for the intelligent use, of Christian sacraments, that the religion which, to the popular mind, they presented as Christian, had lost the essential distinctiveness of the Christian Spirit. The Dutch, as stewards for Christ, had been so easily content with a superficial acceptance of Protestantism; and by requiring conformity to the government faith as a condition of office under government, had produced so large a proportion of unreal converts, that, as years followed years, they became only more and more obviously incapable of informing the nominal Christianity, which their system produced, with that moral and spiritual reality of character, without which Christianity does but travesty and dishonour Christ.

Now we are rash indeed in passing any judgement on others for self-righteousness' sake, or indeed for the sake of any other purpose than that of stern warning to ourselves. We are on our trial now. And what shall the verdict be as to ourselves,—the verdict on what we have done, or grown to be capable of doing,—the verdict on what we have failed to become, or made ourselves incapable of becoming,—in the

sight of the righteousness of God, as stewards for Christ?

Ceylon is a specimen only. Even from the point of view of India, it is but a detail. What of India as a whole? It has been, no doubt, a chequered history, our record in India. The main story we know, and the characteristic anxieties. In many ways it is both a wonder and a pride to us. Not seldom, on the other hand, we are recalled from security of wonder to measure, or to forecast, with the gravest foreboding, volcanic possibilities of disaster.

But it is comparatively seldom that we find our people venturing, at least in public, to discuss the political prospect of the British tenure in India upon its true, that is its divine, basis. It is comparatively seldom that behind and beneath the complex story—on the one hand of British daring, or tenacity, or instinctive and practised skill in government and judicature, on the other of blunt irreligion, or immorality, or calculated selfishness, also British; comparatively seldom that beneath all the complexity of causes like these, and their direct effects, we have a clear discernment that the forces which really make for British dominion are the forces, such as they are, which make British dominion truly capable of representing, or paving the way for, the dominion of Christ. The noble personal religion of individual governors, or soldiers, or traders, or travellers, a personal religion which is not apart

from, but is the consecration and effectiveness of, all their professional effort: the really self-sacrificing work (too little known or thought of) of those who are, or have been, in deed as well as in name, true Christian missionaries: the secret aspirations and efforts and prayers, here at home, which send forth and help to sustain the Christian spirit and energy of civilians, or soldiers, or missionary workers: these things, the Christ-like efforts, the Christ-like sacrifices, are, and from time to time are seen to be, in glimpses of unusual political insight, the true fountains and forces upon which the British tenure of India depends.

There was a time, perhaps, when we thought highly of ourselves because we had supplied to the people of India a comprehensive scheme of intellectual education. And so far, no doubt, so good. A disciplined brain, an available knowledge of history or science or thought; are endowments which those who live as much in the midst of them as we do, are not likely to undervalue. But I suppose we have learned, in India perhaps more forcibly than in any other part of the world (for in India the two things can be sundered, as they cannot, at least for many generations, in a people whose Christian assumptions are ingrained and hereditary), that an education without a morality is not an education; and that a morality without a basis in religious conviction is a system of speculative interest to the intellect, not a discipline that can train, or purify, or give true re-

straint, which is also true power, to the will. It is not by an educational system merely, which continues to be unrooted in moral character and religious conviction, that we shall ultimately fulfil the high and responsible trust that is in our hands in respect of the nations of India. More important, in the long run, even than the administrator, or the soldier, or the educationalist, is the true missionary, and that response in the hearts of a gathering flock, however small or slow, which is the glorious crown of the missionary's work; and withal, as inseparable from the missionary's work, the dutiful earnest prayers of those, whether there or here, who are men of God and of prayer. More important these are, we have good reason to believe, even for the prolongation of our dominion. Or, if, in the will of God, our stewardship should anyhow pass to the hands of another; it is these which will make in that day the essential contrast between honourable discharge from a trust, borne faithfully and divinely rewarded, or the penal displacement of servants who have ignored, and therefore disgraced, their commission.

And what is true of India is true also of our new trust in the Soudan. Whatever doubt there might legitimately be as to details of immediate policy, the wise or equitable handling of the earliest moments: there can be none whatever as to the divine purpose, the essential conditions, and therefore the true policy and aim, of our dominion there. We are there to represent, not

only by fairness of rule, but by the purest reality of religious devotion, the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. When we think of such a commission in the Soudan, we cannot but be reminded of one, of our own blood, whose life and death bore, in their own way, witness to the Soudanese,—a witness singularly pure and winning,—of the royal reality of the service of Christ. There have been, thank God! in British history not a few soldiers and statesmen who have bowed themselves heart and soul to the allegiance of Christ. And he, one of the most attractive and the most successful, alike as a leader of soldiers and as a ruler who firmly planted his rule in the heart of the people, was above all a man whose Christianity shone through and illuminated all he did, or thought, or wished. And since the Christian spirit of the man was the most conspicuous thing in his whole personality, therefore by it he became to all men, of whatever language or creed,—not by ill-timed or tactless words (that is, words deficient in the imaginative insight of true love) but by what he essentially was,—a visible illustration and commendation, as of the Christian spirit, so of the creed, and life, and Church, which are the revelation and embodiment of the Christian spirit.

It may be that this is not the time even to hint at any morals, even to raise any questions, of more searching or permanent import, in respect of British dominion in South Africa. Only, at whatever

time, or in whatever direction, we think of any of these things at all, be the external perplexity what it may, this at least remains behind all, that everywhere alike, and always, Truth is Truth, and God is God.

But we are not occupied only with thoughts, just now, of politics or war. Within the last week or two many in Oxford have been engaged in matters connected with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, or with the necessities of special missions, or with the general duty of missionary intercession. Minds which are really full of the enthusiasm of missionary effort, may feel as though we touched only a lower aspect of their subject, when we speak of its connection with our empire and name. And no doubt the duty of witnessing for Christ in the world is a duty wider than the widest empire: witness the efforts that are, or must be, made within the dominions of Turkey or China or Japan. But even the most enthusiastic will hardly deny, in fact, *either* that temporal dominion, by God's providence, carries with it an accentuated responsibility of missionary effort: *or* that fidelity in missionary effort and faith is the deepest and firmest guarantee for permanence of dominion. Be the cause of Christ as much wider, as much holier, as you please, than any thought of empire; yet in fact, by God's providence, there is, for the present, a connection, which is not obscure, between the two. The connection is not of our

choosing : but to discern it is our duty and privilege. In respect at least of the people whom God has put into our hand, our position is not without its parallel with that of the Jews of old, who were themselves rich in blessing—yet not for themselves so much as for all mankind.

I hardly care whether the words have reference more immediately to our imperial position, or to our missionary duties for Christ ; or whether, or how far, there is any real distinction between the two ; but, in either aspect, let me remind you of words which come often back to a thoughtful mind, words spoken of Israel, yet striking close home to ourselves ; as these from the 105th Psalm, “And He brought forth His people with joy : and His chosen with gladness ; and gave them the lands of the heathen : and they took the labours of the people in possession ; *That they might keep His statutes, and observe His laws !*” or these from the 81st.—“O that My people would have hearkened unto Me : for if Israel had walked in My ways, I should soon have put down their enemies : and turned My hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have been found liars : but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest wheat flour : and with honey out of the stony rock *should I have satisfied thee.*”

As often as we are compelled to recognize the spirit abroad among us which is eager indeed after

the finest wheat flour, and the honey of the rock, and the possession of the lands of the heathen, and the labours of the people, and the hand of the Lord turned against the adversaries, but forgetful of the one essential condition, to which these things are pledged; the echo of these words may well wake in our ears.

Once more, to-day is Advent Sunday. To Christian instinct the coming of the Lord, however full mind or life may be of that coming which was accomplished in the Incarnation, will find its consummating significance in the coming for which the Church still waits and prays. The coming of the Kingdom of the Lord! This is the real goal of all earthly dominion. This is the direct significance of all missionary self-sacrifice.

On either side, in either aspect, to those who are in earnest, the dedication of self is the necessary method of growth, the condition of real advance. In the struggles which belong to temporal dominion, self-sacrifice, overwhelming as it too often is, is yet consistently felt to be ennobling. But there is a sacrifice nobler yet and more beautiful than that of the soldier, or of those who, with bright faces, let their soldier go. The offering of those who offer their best beloved to the work of God's Kingdom among those who know Him not, is an offering as beautiful as is known to man. And those who dedicate themselves to this work, in the Spirit of Christ, have chosen that which, if they can but rise to it, is

the most wholly ennobling life on earth. They have not indeed gone beyond the Lord's prayer—which is (if you will), rudimentary. But they have identified themselves, and all that, to them, life carries or can mean, with the real aspiration of those simple words which from childhood upwards we repeat so readily—*Thy Kingdom Come!*

XXIV

INTERCESSION IN WAR (1)

“Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Every man of the house of Israel that taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.”—EZEKIEL xiv. 1-5.

OUR service is a service of prayer. God is gracious to those who pray. And God can be severe to those who seem to pray.

“I the Lord will answer him by Myself: and I will set My face against that man.”

But we wish to pray; and to be sincere in praying. That is what we are here for. We wish to make an effort to come into His Presence.

How do we come into His presence? This House, and its associations: this hour, and its assemblage; the words of Litany or prayer which we shall use, or shall hear used; these are something: but how little way these take us!

His Presence? It is not local so much, it is a

moral attitude ; a posture of thought ; an attentive-ness, and exertion, of spirit. We can touch it in the study or in the street, and we can miss it in the Cathedral. But it is in the Cathedral now that we desire to find it.

It would be a wonderful thing to know how each mind really conceives of Him : for there are, it may be, as many varying conceptions, as there are minds. And indeed there are many varying aspects of Him which are true : and in which prayer can truly be made to Him.

We shall say perhaps that the vulgarest mode of thought about God,—and the earliest,—is to think of Him just as power : power that could do what we want, and all we want, if only it would. Here is a storehouse of invisible power. When we appeal to Him, we appeal to power. The more we feel the greatness of our needs—the more are we driven upon this appeal to power. When we felt need less keenly, we could let slip the appeal. But now ! We find ourselves in difficulties ; we are discouraged ; we cannot carry things all our own way, for ourselves. Therefore behold us ! making our appeal to Power. O Power,—Thou that canst if Thou wilt,—Give us health ! Give us safety ! Give us victory !

Certainly we have not yet entered into the presence of God. No. We cannot find Him, cannot approach Him, as mere power.

There are many other aspects. We must

learn by degrees to be conscious of them all. To-day I speak only of one. He is power indeed, —but the power of perfect Righteousness. When we make our appeal to Him, we make our appeal to perfect Righteousness, the Righteousness which cannot be besieged by importunity or clamour, the Righteousness that is no respecter of persons. We are come to throw ourselves down in *His* Presence? It is in the Presence of perfect Righteousness, searching Righteousness, that we are trying to range ourselves, and to kneel. We are throwing ourselves upon the appeal to Righteousness.

To enter into the sanctuary of Righteousness, to make our appeal to the power of Righteousness, it really involves something—nay a great deal—about ourselves who make the effort of praying: and something—nay a great deal—about the prayer we make.

First ourselves. We cannot enter into the presence of Righteousness, without an effort to make ourselves at one with Righteousness.

What does this mean? It does not mean a demand for impossibilities. It does not mean that we must be perfectly holy before we can begin to pray. Of course it does not. But it does mean that, in shaping ourselves to the attitude of prayer, we must, as far as our limited capacity goes, try to make complete our purpose, our desire, our serious effort, to be ourselves in true line with Righteousness. It does mean the effort to

disown whatever we are conscious of in ourselves, which cannot stand with Righteousness. It does mean a self-consecration, of character and action, of motive and meaning, of aspiration and desire, to Righteousness.

And then the things we ask for. We cannot ask, of Righteousness, what is not of Righteousness. Hot, worldly feelings,—intemperance, injustice, indiscipline, anger, self-esteem, ambition, pride, these must go; they must die down in our hearts, as we lift to Righteousness a prayer which cannot be mixed up with these. O Righteousness, make us very rich! O Righteousness, fill us with great comfort and world-wide glory! O Righteousness, punish all those who are against us! give them shame, and mortification, and defeat! We cannot come near the presence of Righteousness with prayers that are really comparable to these. We cannot ask what ministers to our pride. We cannot even ask success with a view to the satisfaction of our pride. It is not that we cannot ask for the things which belong to success, or the things of which it is natural to be proud. But if we ask—of God—for such things, then every one of them must be changed, changed searchingly and profoundly, in the process of being consecrated to God. We cannot ask what would put us further from Him. We cannot ask, of Righteousness, what Righteousness would be less than absolutely Righteous in granting to us! So, in respect of

this war, there is much natural feeling to be purged off that our prayer may be such as can be offered in the presence, or as an appeal to the character, of Righteousness. Desire of ease, of comfort, of freedom from pain : desire of wealth, of glory, of conscious strength : desire of the mortification, or defeat, or even suffering, of others : all these are natural. But all these have to be transformed out of their merely natural self-regarding form ; they have to be disciplined, chastened, spiritualized, with the sharp knife of sincere self-humiliation, in the moment when we seriously shape them into prayer, to be presented as our righteous appeal, within the inner sanctuary of Righteousness.

Our whole approach to the presence of Righteousness is a consecration—of ourselves, and of our desires,—to the worship of Righteousness.

It is all a great effort of consecration—of our whole selves—and all our natural impulses. The experience of this war has been full of consecration—consecration of their lives to the death, in thousands of our countrymen : consecration of pain, pain of bodily suffering, pain of bitter heartache and mourning, in scores of thousands. We too have our effort of consecration to make ;—and we are come here to try and make it,—the consecration of our desires to Righteousness. We would not have a desire, we would not shape a prayer, that is not according to the consecration of Righteousness.

Such an effort cannot but be penitential. It implies humiliation. It matches with Lent. Its humiliation does not mean that we were wrong in going to war. It is not connected with any such opinion as that. It involves no sort of self-comparison with other peoples. But it means—what is perfectly certain—that we are very far, individually alike and nationally, very far from the Righteousness of God:—even from such Righteousness as we might, and ought to, have realized.

To enter into the presence of Righteousness is to be humiliated: and perhaps every sincere aspiration of humility is, so far, an approach towards Righteousness. We cannot shrink from the word humiliation, we who are trying to get near the sanctuary of Righteousness.

The winter of this War is to us, then, a consecration—for our reminding, our bracing, our discipline, our purifying: and, as we trust, for our pardon, and our blessing. Because of it we draw near, and make appeal, to Righteousness, that by it, and through it, and out of it, we may all of us, every one, both out there and at home, be brought, from henceforth and for ever, the nearer to Righteousness. We do not wish it not to be, and mean, this. We do not wish the effort of consecration to be merged after all, and let down, to any merely carnal rejoicing in any merely vulgar triumph. That would be a sad ending—an ending for angels to weep over—

to an experience in which there has been so much of divine consecration. Individually alike and nationally, in the end as well as in the means, in the after-effects as well as in the striving and suffering of the processes, we are here because we desire to enter, and to enter personally and for ever, into the presence and consecration of Righteousness.

It is harder perhaps to consecrate success than disaster,—happiness than anxiety. We have much, in any case, to learn. May God give us grace to learn it, and to learn it in time! to learn to understand the opportunities which His pardon and blessing would open out to us—if it is still His will to pardon and bless: and to learn what it would be to respond to them on our part, individually and nationally, in the Name and the Spirit of Righteousness!

XXV

INTERCESSION IN WAR (2)

“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes. And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments: we have sinned, and have dealt perversely, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even turning aside from Thy precepts and from Thy judgements: neither have we hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets, which spake in Thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.”—DANIEL ix. 3-6.

LAST Wednesday I tried to speak of drawing near to the presence of God as drawing near to the presence of Righteousness; and of our prayer to God as our appeal to Righteousness. This was no new discovery. It was not only obviously true: it was an obvious truism. (Yet it is strange how we make discoveries in truisms—as though they were not only new but astonishing secrets!) I asked you to think what necessarily followed from this particular secret, or truism, as to the character of the selves who try (as we are trying) to pray, and as to the things which they can ask in real prayer.

In respect for instance to the present war, it would be astonishing, if it were not obvious,

how a due sense that God is Righteous, will refine and transfigure the whole effort of prayer. It will alter the very character of the ideals with the desire of which we can dare to identify ourselves; it will alter, in the act of praying, our instinctive hopes: and we, in our instincts and ideals changed and toned through praying, shall be toned and changed ourselves.

I do not ask you this afternoon to strike out a new thought. The one simple fundamental self-evident truth that God is Righteousness, may be enough for us still. Rather I would somewhat widen the application of it.

For this very reason, because God is Righteousness, we have much to do, at all times, in the way of intercessory prayer. I am thinking still of our country, and the duty we owe to our country before God. We are loyal, we are patriotic, we are lovers of England. To those who believe in God, and who have some notion of what believing in God must mean, to love England is to love the identification of England with Righteousness: and to deplore—not in vague terms which come from, and which touch, no hearts, but in personal sorrow, and effort of heart towards God,—whatever sunders England from Righteousness.

So was Daniel a loyal Jew. And his loyalty found its vent in the fervour of his litany of national confession and national deprecation, as he “set his face” “by prayer and supplications,

with fasting and sackcloth and ashes" before God.

The tuning of the English people to Righteousness, the battle, in England, and for England, against worldliness and sin; it is a vast work. It lies back behind—yet it really is wholly of one piece with—our intercession for our country in her present, or in any other, particular strain of trial. Now we cannot leave this vast work to some giant prophet. There is no Daniel set apart, to humble himself, and intercede, while we go our way. On the contrary, in a Christian country, this prophetic office belongs to every one, who is within the name and the knowledge of Christ. It is part of the essential prerogative, and responsibility, of Christians, that they are all inspired, all prophets, all partakers of the Spirit. To say that the work is not ours, is to say that we have no real care that the work should be done. If it is not ours, it is no one's. It is ours at least as directly as it was Daniel's. It was his, because he knew God, and loved his country. If any man has love for his country, and has discovered that God is Righteousness, the duty and the power are forthwith with him.

Indeed it is *more* with us than with many others. Others are even now schooling themselves, on the battlefield, to be a willing sacrifice to Righteousness. Others are pressed with hard work and heavy responsibility, in this way or in

that. Others are dedicated as missionaries for Christ in the squalor and bustle of cities, or in their separated lives among the heathen. *We* have our opening and our duty here. The work of intercession is pre-eminently ours.

But if it is our work, by prayer, to try to identify our country with Righteousness, we must face the things by which our country is defiled, and we must face them *as our own*. It is not enough to hold ourselves utterly aloof. It is not enough to condemn, in passion or in scorn, as though the things which stifle Righteousness in the midst of us were nothing to ourselves. It is not enough to be shocked and turn away. It is not enough to say in thought or in word, that we do not care to read, or hear, police news: or that we never go into a crowd. It may not be our duty to go into a crowd, or to meddle with police news. But we *have* a duty, from which we can not be thus easily dispensed: and a duty which concerns these very things. We have a duty to the crowd; to the tempted; to the tainted; to the miserable; yes, and to those who tempt, and taint, and make miserable, their fellows and themselves. If the place of our duty is not there—in the midst of the crowd: so much the more is it, in the quietness, here.

Some two months ago an appeal was issued by the Archbishops and Bishops to all members of the English Church. It was a national appeal, an appeal which asked them to mark the last year of

a dying century by solemn national intercession before God.

Here is one sentence out of the appeal. "The spirit of materialism which has invaded national and social life, the consequent relaxation of the sense of personal responsibility, the power and influence of sins which lower national character, such as intemperance, gambling, and self-indulgence, and the thoughtless and indolent acquiescence in grave public evils—these things, which sadly contrast with the blessings and advantages given to us of God—loudly call us to prayer."

I can only allude to this appeal. But as to the feeling which it presupposes, the corporate sense, which feels that what touches the nation touches us; which feels that the honour of the people is our honour, and the shame of the people our shame: can we take it too closely to heart?

If we have felt it keenly in material warfare, and British victory is our own gladness of spirit: and the loss of British guns and British lives, strikes our own lives to the quick, and is our own great loss and our own overshadowing sadness: do we really think that we are less bound to one another before God in the things which morally and spiritually affect our national well- or ill-being?

It is not our scornful condemnation that social wrong requires, so much as our penitence, and our prayer.

Even material war, and material disaster, send

us straight back, as thoughtful men, to consider our relation to, our dependence upon, and our appeal to, Righteousness. How much more the warfare against spiritual wickedness! For this not only is connected with—but it *is* our relation to, and dependence on, Righteousness.

Here is a call, which includes, and lies back behind, and is deeper and wider and more permanent than, our call to intercession in the time of war. Yet it is, in essence, the same thing. Based on the same faith, it is the same appeal.

It is not a question of the Righteousness or unRighteousness of some others far away—with whom we have no concern—on whom we can look with calm indifference. Rather it is a question of the very being of the community of which we are, and on which we depend for our being. It is the supreme question of our national relation—or national lack of relation—to Righteousness,—and to God, who is Righteousness.

XXVI

THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

—1 JOHN ii. 9.

THESE words of S. John contain a double antithesis. There is the contrast between light and darkness: and there is the contrast between love and hate. Men are ready, it is implied, to claim to be in the light; but their claim is apt to be false. The test of reality of light is a manifested reality of love. What is the “light” which is spoken of, which is so easily claimed, but which is to be tested by love?

The text itself contrasts light with darkness. Now light as opposed to darkness may suggest to us two things. The light may be purity of conscience, holiness, as opposed to the polluted shadows of sin; or the light may be clearness of eyes, true knowledge, as opposed to the confusing shadows of ignorance or mistake.

That the first of these two ideas belongs to the words of S. John, is, I think, abundantly clear from the last six verses of the first chapter of this

epistle. But, even there, the eighth verse passes naturally and imperceptibly from the thought of goodness in character to that of discernment of truth. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And with this compare the sixth verse of the fourth chapter: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

So far, then, what I want to suggest is not that the "light" stands for holiness as opposed to discernment: nor for discernment as opposed to holiness: but rather that in the language of Scripture, and in the conception of a S. John, these are but two aspects, barely distinguished from each other, and ultimately inseparable; two aspects of one living reality, which, because it is either, therefore is necessarily both. The life of truth, just because it is upright, consistent, loving,—therefore is insight. Holiness of character is the vision of truth. The vision of truth, embodied as character, is holiness.

If this be so: and in this form at least I cannot conceive that the principle is even disputable; I should like to ask you to think of the righteousness, which Christian faith does indeed both reveal and confer, upon this side—the side which to some of us is perhaps least familiar,—as being even in the highest sense, discernment of the perfect equity of truth; as having therefore,

within its inmost character, whatever perfect equity of truth requires.

We speak, then, of Christian faith, and Christian character, as discernment of, and devotion to, perfect equity of truth. Now if I should urge this thought with reference to the truth of religious doctrine or creed, the principle, though not free from difficulties and objections, would at least be fairly familiar; and it would be felt that, with whatever explanatory qualifications, it must in some sense be true, if there is to be such a thing as any orthodoxy or truth at all.

But will you think of it this morning in relation—not so much to religious doctrine, as to the questions and contests of practical life? Think of devotion to the Spirit of Justice, think of unswerving equity of judgement,—not as a cold ideal, a passionless abstraction, a dead mathematical equality, but rather as a vehement pursuit, an informing passion, as a glowing reflection, in human character, from the essential Divineness of Truth. To do perfect justice, to discern perfect truth, in act, in word, in thought: the justice towards which any real Christian socialism (however bungling as yet) must at least aspire in respect of all trafficking between man and man: the truth which in our keenest argumentative contests is very rarely, it may be, quite the monopoly of either combatant: is not even this part of the perfect realization of that character which is at

once the ideal, and the possibility, of the Church of Jesus Christ?

But if this overmastering devotion to truth and equity be an element in the Christian spirit and character; it may be worth while to consider some respects in which we are placed, in fact, at no small disadvantage for the pursuit of it.

Is it not true that our experience of party government is apt to be a training, not towards perfect equity, but rather towards disproportion in judgement? Consider the educational effect upon private character of that upon which our entire public system is based, this organized rivalry of conflicting parties. I am not passing for a moment out of the sphere of religion into that of politics, if, from the side of religion I ask you to observe, as mere matter of fact, that whatever be the practical wisdom, or even (it may be) the necessity, of government by party, there is at all events this one defect which is almost inseparable from the working of it. Stand on which side we may, the stress and strain of party conflict is too apt to work on our characters as an effective education towards mental one-sidedness, that is against Divine equity of perfect truth. Every contested election to every Parliament, every School Board, every County Council, begets in us, only too easily, so exclusive, so fierce an insistence on some aspects of truth, as in fact lowers our capacity of insight, patient and loving, into the manifold completeness of

the Truth of God. For in every such contest there are two strong tendencies almost inevitably at work, which are not conducive to real insight into truth. First, though the issues involved are apt in reality to be multifarious, complicated, intricate, it becomes almost necessary, by ruthless suppression and ignoring, to squeeze everything down, artificially, unreally, unfairly, to some one single alternative. But the whole Truth is manifold, living, delicate, in every detail of its complexity. The true Christian ethics of party politics have, it may be, hardly been thought out as yet. But how many consciences, amongst elected members and amongst electors, have writhed under the seeming necessity of so acting as to ignore considerations which nevertheless were vital for anything more than the rudest and most unworthy expression of truth!

Here is this first then; this (as it were) brutal lopping off of almost every principle, however vital in itself, save perhaps some one, in order, by whatever surgical violence, to produce an ultimately simple and single issue: and then secondly, in respect of any such issue as remains, how forcible is the pressure of party contest towards the most reckless spirit of exaggeration, fiercely overpainting, on one side, every touch of what is good: more fiercely overpainting, on the other, every detail that is, or can by any means be made to seem to be, doubtful of credit. It is tempting, no doubt, to say much more than we mean, as a means of

gaining attention to some part of what we say. Vain plea! whose whole appeal is to the worldly cunning of such as will accept it! The Christian will live in protest against any such supposed necessity of exaggeration. But even should any one plead that such things are necessary, yet would it remain none the less inevitably true that they are demoralizing to our character:—plainly demoralizing, if our over-statements be purposely and consciously made: but if they be, in us, already unconscious, then alas! is the demoralizing work so much the more effectively complete!

Will it be urged that the practice of conscious partisanship is *not* the worst training for judicial sagacity? That on the contrary in the experience of the law courts, it is the able advocate of yesterday who becomes the able Judge of to-day? I would answer that the comparison, though plausible, is utterly vitiated, by one broad contrast in the conditions of the two cases. The advocate in the law court is avowedly an advocate. His position presupposes an advocate, also as an advocate, on the opposite side: and both alike discharge their duty as advocates, with the background behind them of the Court, which is as professionally judicial as they are one-sided; and which, just because it is not one-sided but judicial, is necessarily always behind them and above them. But the party statesman tries to pose not as an advocate pleading before, and subject to, a judge,—but rather as the judicial wisdom of the

court. He affects to present not the half, but the whole, of the Truth. Skill to present the half—either half—as half, may be admirable training towards appreciation of the whole: not so the habit of misconceiving the half, as the whole.

Will any one say that after all things like these are but little relevant to the truth of religion? That these are largely matters of speculative opinion: while religion belongs to the practical character? That religion therefore, in national or social politics, has no proper concern with the political judgement, but with such things only as the loyalty, honesty, fidelity, patience with which a man serves and obeys whatever his political judgement may be? Certainly this would be to contradict the thought with which we began. But remember again,—and the echoes of a score of passages will I think come back to the mind,—in how real a sense it is true that the religion of Jesus Christ is a truth of vision, a perfectness of insight, a clear eye, a Divine knowledge, a Spirit of Wisdom. You may say what you will of the higher value of the heart than the head, of the moral character as compared with the intellect or reason. You will have a meaning herein, which is (God knows!) most profoundly and vitally true. And yet your antithesis will be an unreal one after all. Neither Scripture nor Truth so divorce what are, or are to be, but two aspects of one life. “He that is

spiritual," says S. Paul, "judgeth all things"; and "we have the mind of Christ."¹

Has the mind of Christ no wisdom for human affairs? Or think of the significance of the opening verses of S. John. For indeed every real perfecting of the heart is, or should be, a purging of the sight, an opening of the eyes, no less. Every discipline of the moral character is—not an accentuation of mere character at the cost of intelligent reason; but a widening of the meaning and power of intelligent reason, by the insight—the *insight*, remember—which is the prerogative of disciplined character.

But once more perhaps it will be urged that this, however true as a Christian ideal, must still remain outside of practical life. Politics, it will be urged, must be politics; and organization is necessary for victory in this world, and votes must be (sometimes even roughly) disciplined. Ideals, therefore, are all well, perhaps true, as ideals; but practical success must be won by coarser means.

Is this true? There is a place no doubt for playful partisanship. Shout by all means, in blind loyalty, for school or for university. But partisanship cannot be at once both good-humoured play and work in grim earnest. And as to success: is it really achieved, in this world, by the sacrifice of, even the most ideal, enthusiasm for truth? Success? its methods are not so simple as they

seem: not always perhaps even in an issue which seems so physically simple as a match or a race. Less simple certainly, more complicated, perhaps more paradoxical, as the issues become less and less physical, as they rise more and more into the spheres of intellectual, of moral, of spiritual, right or wrong doing. Success? we are speaking indeed of success in this world; but we are speaking from the point of view of the Christian religion, and its insight into Truth. Success? I must not, at this time, follow out a new train of thought, but at least in these parting sentences I may suggest what should obviously follow.

Men call to-day Passion Sunday. We are passing from the Lenten preparation to the shadows of Passiontide. At this season at least it is impossible for us to forget that the religion of the Christ is the religion of the Cross. At the core of Christian belief—behold! the Crucifix! And the Cross is no mere symbol of a dead past. If He suffered once for all, this was not that our lives should be untouched by the Cross, but rather that the Cross should be the very secret of our lives. Does the Cross mean suffering? does the Cross mean defeat? It does. But the Christian knows, and wonders to know, that that suffering, that defeat, is the victorious power which has conquered, and which does still conquer, the world. If ever, in this world, there was absolute, undying success, behold! and remember that the

application of the truth is as wide as human life—
behold! the way of success was—no sacrifice of
truth, but the sacrifice of everything for Truth.
The way of success was, in fact, the silent pain,
and the crushing defeat, of the Cross.

XXVII

ENTHUSIASM FOR TRUTH

“But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”—S. LUKE x, 42.

Is there any one who has not thrilled, at one time or another,—thrilled with all the sympathetic power of which his imagination was capable,—when he thought of the choice of Mary? thought of what it meant, thought of what it produced, thought of the blessing which was forthwith pronounced upon it? “That good part.” To sit at His feet, to listen, to take in, to be still of heart, *vacare considerationi*, to be within His presence, and to realize it as His presence; yes, it is the heart of the reality, it is the very core of real truth and life.

It is more important even than activity as activity. It is more the heart of the matter. It is necessary indeed in order to make activity itself what activity ought to be. But it is not incompatible with activity. Nothing is said against work. It is not implied that Martha was wrong in serving. Something indeed was lacking in her service—and behind it. But the fact of service, as service, is not wrong. There is an antithesis between

the life of contemplation and such impatient activity as would disparage contemplation, or shut out the possibility of it; but there is no antithesis between contemplation and activity. These are two aspects of life which are often put as antithetical, but there is no real antithesis between them. The contemplative life, and the practical; the mystical life, and the disciplinarian: at least a Theological College knows well, if others know not, how unreal is the contradiction between these two. For a Theological College exists for this very end,—to secure the meditative and personal character, not instead, but for the sake, of the effective and serviceable work. Is not this the very *εργον* of a Theological College: to train men to practical work by training the inner spirit to that calm consecration of resolve of which practical work is the necessary outcome? “He went about doing good” is a description, as from the outside, of a life of which this was by no means the inner clue. It is but the outer aspect of the life which spent whole nights in prayer with God, the life whose inward secret was Oneness with the Father. To go about doing good is plainly not incompatible with the “good part” of Mary.

But whilst we repudiate the idea that “that good part” means any lack of practical activity, it is upon the good part as what it is, and as good because of what it is, that we now chiefly dwell. In other words, it is not so much upon the detail of those active ministries which result from the life of

a Theological College, as upon that which the life of the Theological College aims at and means in itself; and that which it means is not so much to be found, either in detail of things done, or in technical knowledge gained, as in a certain personal discipline: what we have learned to call a certain *ἡθος* or atmosphere.

Now directly we talk of the *ἡθος* or atmosphere of a Theological College, while we speak to the hearts of those who have learned to love it, we are saying the very thing which makes the faces of those who doubt look grave. To the one, this *ἡθος* is the heart of the value, to the other this *ἡθος* is the point of the risk. And both, in their way, are right. For according to the character of the spiritual atmosphere, is the true effect of the College experience. And yet both may easily be wrong. The one side assumes, perhaps too readily, that the atmosphere in which they have learned to be spiritually at home, must be true and right. The other side assumes, in large part *à priori*, that any atmosphere of youthful enthusiasm must be one-sided. Is not this really the instinct which lies at the heart of much of the uneasiness which is often felt, by critics from without and by critics from above, as to the innate tendency of Theological College life? Explicitly or implicitly it is apt to be assumed, that a school of feeling, as a school,—that intensity of conviction, as intensity,—that loyal enthusiasm, as enthusiasm,—must proceed from, and must tend to produce, what, with all

its moral beauty, yet must needs be more or less partial, narrow, and sectional.

Now it may be admitted at once that something in this direction would be the characteristic failure of a College, so far as it failed, in its high aim. But need it therefore fail? There is no virtue, I suppose, which has not its own characteristic parody. But do we, because of the parodies, proscribe or suspect the virtues?

Need enthusiasm be one-sided? Need it suppress or ignore some aspects of the many-sidedness of truth in order to retain its character as enthusiasm?

I will meet this question by another. Is there not such a thing as enthusiasm for equity, as equity, and that in the intellectual no less than in the moral sphere? Is there not such a thing as enthusiasm, not for party as party, but for truth as truth? Does any one suppose that while enthusiasm must be blind, equity is a coldly mathematical thing, coldly passionless because arithmetically just? Is equity as equity, exact justice as exact justice, is righteousness, in the sphere of intellectual things, a quality indifferent or passionless? Is it not a passion, precisely in the sense, in which love, Divine love, is a consuming passion? Is it not a fire, precisely in the sense, in which love, Divine love, is a burning flame? The love of God, cultivated in meditative silence, is a love—not more for goodness than for truth. And if corporate life has a certain tendency to substitute average moral standards for the highest; so that, in a corporate

life, the corporate moral standard has always to be kept at its height by the effort of individuals, who rather tune its standard to their own, than form their own merely from the average of others: so it is in things intellectual. The enthusiasm for truth, cultivated in meditative silence before God, is an enthusiasm which does not simply borrow from, but which reacts upon and corrects, the average corporate assumptions as to what is exactly true.

Is not this enthusiasm for truth, truth of Divine intellect, truth of Divine theology, itself a necessary element in the atmosphere of a healthy Theological College? The College desires to cultivate, as an ideal, the ideal of intellectual candour and theological equity. So that the man who really caught this theological ideal would exactly *not* be what could with justice be called a party man. He would *not* take his judgements ready made. He would not be found shouting with a crowd. He would not grow hot in partisan assertion, nor yet in partisan denunciation, of principles which he had never properly explored. Only this would not mean that he was in any sense either indifferent or cold. On the contrary, he would be fired with a living enthusiasm. But he would have got far beyond the shallow fallacy that warmth should mean, or could condone, one-sidedness; that to be enthusiastic was to be partisan. He would have a real intellectual enthusiasm. But it would be for causes rather than for parties. It would be for truths rather than for

causes. It would be for whole truths as against half-truths. It would be for truth which he had, with patience, mastered intellectually, rather than for truth as he had caught it up at second hand. It would be for truth, as truth, for truth balanced, complete, and large: for truth, as he himself advanced in life and experience, ever more inclusive as it was more profound; it would be for this, not for any merely youthful formulas or party shibboleths, that his real enthusiasm would be reserved. Truth might indeed be represented in his time, more or less truly, by popular causes, or by organization of parties. But the mere popularity of a cause, the mere organization of a party, has in itself—(as he, in his College life, would have learnt to feel)—some tendency to blunt and blur the exact precision of truth, even of the very truth which gave it life, and which it existed to maintain; and he, as a true enthusiast for truth as truth, would be always upon his guard against that blunting effect of popular accord, of heated feeling, or of party strength.

Now so far I have put this more or less hypothetically: as an ideal possibility, as an element in the ideal perfectness of the training of a Theological College life. But now I would ask you to think whether this, to which I have pointed as an ideal, is not itself a true element—in some ways perhaps the very most central and characteristic element,—in the true meaning of Anglicanism. May it not be said to be this, this passionate, unswerving, allegiance

to truth, as truth, truth apart from popular (or even venerable) perversions to the right hand or the left, which constitutes what is peculiar in the Anglican position?

There are those among us, perhaps, who are a little impatient when we talk at all of a characteristic, or distinctive, Anglicanism. Is not all such impatience just a little unreal? It is true, of course, that there are elements, in the English nature, of foolish self-sufficiency, and stubborn self-will. It is true that English Churchmen have been apt, too often, to boast of their own insularity, in terms which would seem to imply that isolation was in itself an excellence instead of being, at the best, a limitation; in terms which would seem incompatible with any true appreciation, or yearning, towards the essential Catholicity of the Church, and that mutual submission and acceptance, which any real Catholicity requires. It is true that a protest was needed, and is needed still, against a false ideal of insularity. It is true that the Church in England is not, in her own ideal, insular; that she is continuous with, that she takes her stand wholly upon, the primitive and the patristic Church. But it is also true that (apart from her own world-wide developments in the last 200 years) there is a certain real *fact* of insularity. It is true that she has a real point of view of her own. And it is true that that point of view, or attitude, which is her own, and which is characteristic of her, is not at present shared, as we can hope and pray that it may

be shared, by other Churches and communions. In no point does she look simply to others for her modes of her own truth. In not a few points she consciously and deliberately differs from others, as a result (so in heart and conscience she believes) of her own more scrupulous sensitiveness as to truth.

Is it not just this—this enthusiasm for intellectual equity, this enthusiasm for exactness of theological truth—which has really been characteristic of Anglicanism as Anglicanism, and has been, age after age, the true glory of the greatest among our Anglican theologians. What, for example, can characterize more exactly the mind and work of Richard Hooker? Is it not all one superb effort, the most sustained, and the most profound,—an effort which nothing less than the enthusiasm of a life-long devotion could possibly have animated—to be exactly intellectually just, to be exactly theologically true? Whether he succeeded, or not, in every particular, is a different and even a subordinate question. We have not learned to look with much theological respect on the claim to infallibility—for any theologian, however saintly, or for any sort of official, however august. But however fallible Richard Hooker may be, can any one doubt the splendour of the service rendered, not so much by his theological conclusions, even where they are most admirable, as by his theological methods, by the candour of his intellect, by the loyal humility and fervour of his devotion, by the profoundness of his inquiries, and of his insight, by

the fearless thoroughness of his allegiance to truth : can any one doubt the splendour of the service which he rendered to the cause of theological truth, and charity, throughout the world ? And can anything be more characteristic of Anglicanism than is the general character of Hooker's work, just in, and just because of, these very particulars ? And Hooker is but a specimen, albeit a very eminent specimen, of a temper which we recognize in many besides—as in other generations, so in our own ; in one, for instance, who has been more and more recognized as a true representative of what Anglicanism is, one who was a modern namesake of Hooker's, the late Dean of S. Paul's.

I have tried to speak, as from the point of view of a Theological College, of one aspect of what “that good part” which was the choice of Mary, might ideally mean to its life.

Before ending, I may be allowed to add a few words on another aspect, which has been always an important element in the Cuddesdon idea. The College in this place has always been, from another side and in another way, not independent, not private, not partisan, but avowedly Diocesan, under the shadow and influence of the Diocesan Bishop. This Diocesan relation and dependence has been no accident, but fundamental to its own aim and character. And therefore also it is matter of profound and filial concern to the College, when any cloud of sorrow rests upon the Diocese or upon the home of the Diocesan. There may be those who

have felt that the very fact of the gathering in this place to-day seemed to show some lack of reverence for the mourning of the Palace and the Diocese. Assuredly, if that were true, there is no one who could with so little seemliness be standing here to speak to you, as I, who have received, at the hands of the Bishop, a wealth of unbounded kindness, from the moment when he first became a Bishop. No ! whatever the strength of the grounds may be for gathering the life of the College together to-day (and many of the grounds for doing so are obvious), it is assuredly not a gathering without reverence or without mourning. The College would be false to its own fundamental principles, to its own essential relation, through the Oxford Episcopate, with the breadth and with the continuity of the Church at large, if it were not bowed, from the heart, to-day, with the sense of loss ; the loss of one, its Bishop, its Father in God, whom all the world has known as a rarely strong and notably great man.

Whom all the world has known. And yet has all the world known ? Have we even rightly known, ourselves ? It is a singular thing—or is it singular ?—that it is not in the full tide of their strength and greatness, that we always love with the deepest appreciativeness, and know with the truest insight of knowledge, the souls of the great and the strong. Sometimes, the day of overclouding is a day of revealing. Sometimes, the day of weakness is a day of intimacy. Sometimes, things that were veiled by the very brilliancy of

the noonday, become clearer in the silence and twilight of evening. Sometimes the simple, dutiful trustful, childlike spirit, which has been partly concealed under the very versatility of a giant intellect, can be felt more clearly when the intellectual splendour, when the intellectual formidableness, no longer challenge, and employ, all our powers of attention.

The Prince and the Great Man, over whose vacant throne we mourn to-day, and those great Bishops also who have gone before him, we commend, in awe, to God; while we dare, in our dim way, to try and think of them, with the lowliest humility and reverence, as having found, please God! in a sense which far transcends all our lower analogues, the true meaning of that good part which Mary chose.

May the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace!

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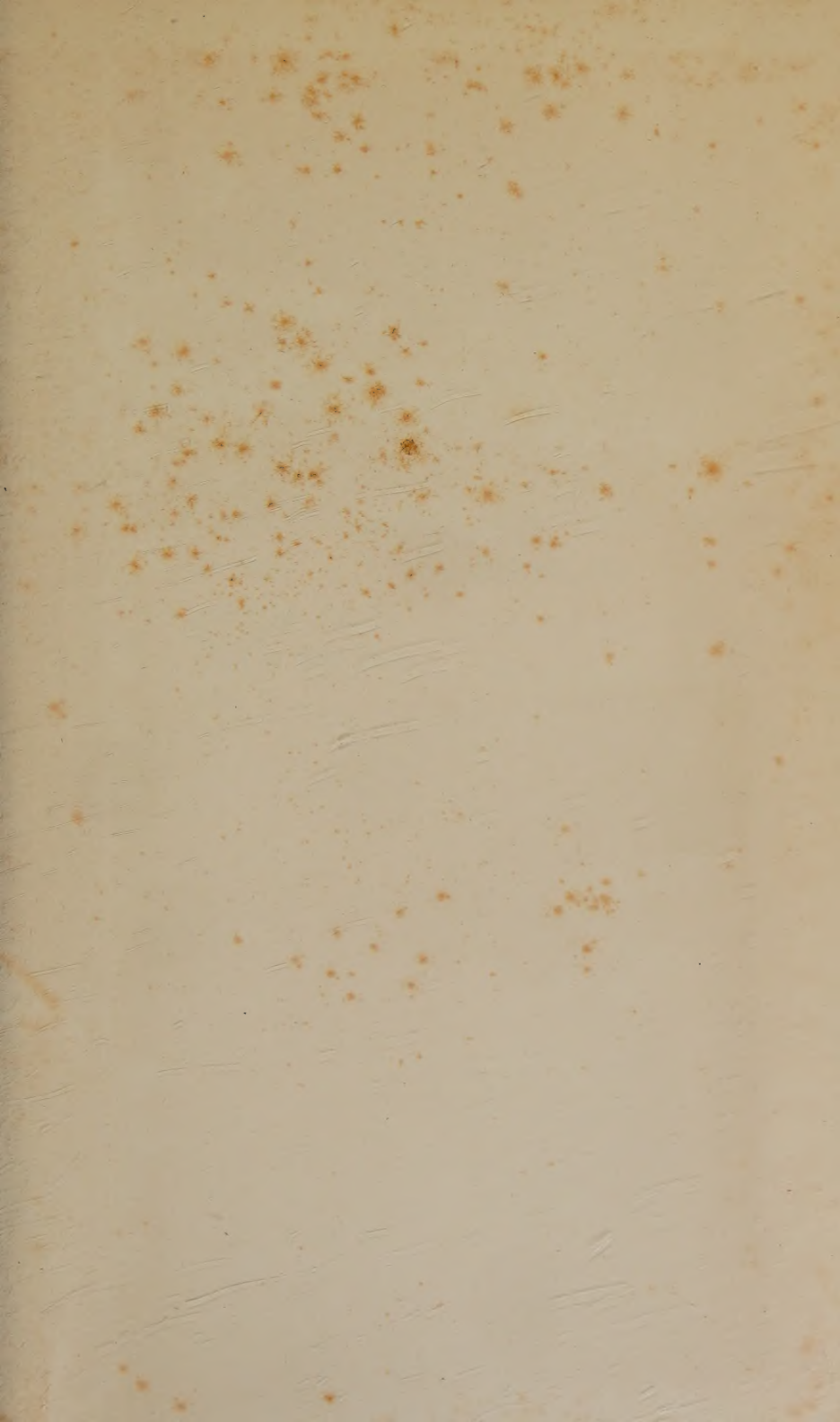
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